Forts, fields and towns: Communities in Northwest Transylvania from the first century BC to the fifth century AD

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Abstract

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This thesis examines the social landscape of Northwest Transylvania in the Late Iron Age, Roman and post-Roman periods. This region consists of the modern Romanian counties of Cluj and Sălaj and roughly encompasses the Roman province of Dacia Porolissensis and part of Free Dacia. Roman Dacia represents an extraordinary case of Roman imperial occupation: it was one of the last major territories to be conquered and one of the first to be released. Special emphasis is placed on how Roman occupation as a phenomenon transformed the landscape; but unlike previous research the military is neither the primary focus of analysis nor the only agent of change. In the years after the Trajanic conquest of Dacia in AD 106, immigrants swarmed into the new province from all over the Empire to colonise the land which written sources indicate was severely depopulated. It was this migration as a whole that led to the destabilisation of existing Iron Age territorial units and radical transformations of settlement patterns, burial, ritual and land-use.

To analyse these issues, archaeological sites and find spots of material dating to between the first century BC and the fifth century AD within the study area were entered into a database along with spatial coordinates. These data were then integrated into a Geographic Information System to facilitate geospatial analyses. These analyses indicated stark discontinuity between the Late Iron Age and Roman period in all forms of settlement and strong regional variation in every period. From the annihilation of the native communities, new ones with distinct identities emerged which found resonance after the departure of the Romans in the late third century.

Key words: Dacia, Roman, Landscape, Transylvania

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Table of Contents

Table of Figures...8

Chapter 1: Introducing Roman Dacia 11

1.1. Research aims 12
1.2. The historical narrative of Roman Dacia 13
    1.2.1. Late La Tène geography and politics 14
    1.2.2. Roman occupation 21
    1.2.3. Post-Roman migration and continuity 26
    1.2.4. Gaps in the narrative 29
1.3. The theoretical background to studies of Roman Dacia 29
    1.3.1. *Terra deserta* and antiquarianism 30
    1.3.2. Protochronism 33
    1.3.3. The Daco-Roman paradigm 37
1.4. Archaeological methodology and its limitations 39
1.5. The necessity of re-evaluation 42

Chapter 2: Theory and Method 43

2.1. Spatial and temporal context 43
2.2. Key theoretical concepts 48
    2.2.1. Connectivity 49
    2.2.2. Community 51
2.3. Methodology 54
    2.3.1. Data collection 54
    2.3.2. The creation of the database 55
    2.3.3. The Geographical Information System 60
2.4. Conclusion 64

Chapter 3: The Environment of Northwest Transylvania 65

3.1. Environmental Character of Northwest Transylvania 65
    3.1.1. Mountains 67
    3.1.2. Hills 69
    3.1.3. Hydrology 71
    3.1.4. River valleys 73
    3.1.5. Forests 75
3.2. Climate 77
3.3. Communication networks 78
    3.3.1. The Salt Road 79
    3.3.2. The river network 82

3.3.3. Roman roads ... 85

Chapter 4: Settlement Patterns and Forms ... 88
4.1. Hillforts ... 88
4.1.1. Hillforts and associated settlements ... 99
4.1.2. Contextualising hillforts ... 102
4.2. Major urban centres ... 104
4.2.1. The end of towns ... 115
4.2.2. Contextualising towns ... 119
4.3. Military bases and fortified structures ... 122
4.3.1. Small military structures ... 135
4.3.2. Contextualising military settlements ... 140
4.4. Rural settlement ... 142
4.4.1. Individual homesteads ... 156
4.4.2. Villages ... 157
4.4.3. Villas ... 164
4.4.4. Contextualising rural settlement ... 170
4.5. Land-use, industry and consumption ... 173
4.5.1. Cultivation ... 174
4.5.2. Animal husbandry ... 178
4.5.3. Mining and quarrying ... 185
4.5.4. Metalwork ... 190
4.5.5. Pottery and tile production ... 191
4.6. Settlement hierarchy and typology ... 193

Chapter 5: Burial and ritual in Northwest Transylvania ... 196
5.1. Burial ... 196
5.1.1. Burials at hillforts ... 197
5.1.2. Urban and military burial ... 201
5.1.3. Burial in the countryside ... 213
5.1.4. Burial and community ... 221
5.2. Ritual depositions ... 223
5.2.1. Structured depositions in round pits ... 225
5.2.2. Rectangular pits with signs of burning ... 230
5.2.3. Burials in living spaces ... 232
5.3. Votives and monuments ... 233
5.3.1. Urban and military votives and monuments ... 234
5.3.2. Votive inscriptions and statuettes in the countryside ... 239
5.4. Centres of cult ... 240
5.4.1. Constructions at hillforts ... 241
5.4.2. Shrines ... 242
5.4.3. Complexes at towns and military bases ... 244

5.5. Christianity ... 248
5.6. Conclusion ... 249

Chapter 6: Micro-regional Landscapes ... 255
6.1. The Meseş Gate area ... 255
6.1.1. Settlement trends and the social landscape ... 257
6.2. The Şimleu Depression ... 267
6.2.1. Settlement trends and the social landscape ... 268
6.2.2. Şimleu Silver and networks ... 274
6.3. Upper Someşul Mic River Valley ... 278
6.3.1. Settlement trends and the social landscape ... 279
6.4. Potaissa and its hinterland ... 287
6.4.1. Settlement trends and the social landscape ... 288
6.5. Conclusions ... 296

Chapter 7: Conclusions ... 303
7.1. Communities and the landscape ... 303
7.1.1. The Late Iron Age ... 303
7.1.2. The Roman period ... 306
7.1.3. The post-Roman period ... 310
7.2. Communities beyond locality ... 312
7.2.1. Aristocratic communities ... 312
7.2.2. Regimental communities ... 318
7.2.3. Ethnic communities ... 320
7.2.4. A case for a Daco-Roman community ... 322
7.3. Final remarks ... 325

Bibliography ... 327

Accompanying disk

Notes on database
Database of sites and finds

Table of Figures

Figure 1.1: Possible extent of Burebista's influence by mid-first century BC.
Figure 1.2: Late second century Roman Dacia with major urban centres indicated.
Figure 1.3: Statues of Trajan and Decebalus in the city of Deva.
Figure 1.4: Aerial photograph and satellite imagery coverage of Romania.
Figure 2.1: Cluj and Sălaj counties within modern Romania.
Figure 2.2: Study area within the Roman period.
Figure 2.3: Chronological schemes of the Late Iron Age, Roman and post-Roman periods.
Figure 3.1: Conceptual model for geological formation of Transylvania in the Late Pliocene/Early Quaternary.
Figure 3.2: Geographical features of Northwest Transylvania.
Figure 3.3: Water, water bodies and springs in Northwest Transylvania.
Figure 3.4: Road leading down to a gorge in the mountain south of Ceahlau.
Figure 3.5: A modern village system.
Figure 3.6: Pre-modern routes for the movement of salt from Transylvania to the west.
Figure 3.7: Historical transhumance routes in Romania.
Figure 3.8: Navigability of rivers in Northwest Transylvania in relationship to settlements and mineral resources.
Figure 3.9: Roman road network in Northwest Transylvania.
Figure 4.1: Distribution of hillforts in Northwest Transylvania
Figure 4.2: Plans of Măgura Moigradului, Marca-Cetate and Şimleu-Cetate.
Figure 4.3: Plan of Şimleu-Observator.
Figure 4.4: Associated settlements and activity around the Şimleu hillforts.
Figure 4.5: Towns in Roman Dacia with study area indicated.
Figure 4.6: Layout of Roman Potaissa with possible extent.
Figure 4.7: Plan of Roman Napoca based on current knowledge.
Figure 4.8: Layout of Porolissum.
Figure 4.9: Villages and villas in relation to Roman towns.
Figure 4.10: Roman military bases.
Figure 4.11: Layout of military bases based on surface finds.
Figure 4.12: Late Iron Age rural settlement and settlement areas in relation to hillforts.
Figure 4.13: Roman period rural settlement, with settlements mentioned in text.
Figure 4.14: Post-Roman rural settlement, with settlements mentioned in text.
Figure 4.15: Early post-Roman rural settlement in the former imperial territory.
Figure 4.16: Roman period architectural elaboration.
Figure 4.17: Comparison of architectural elaboration and settlement size.
Figure 4.18: Plans of rounded sunken structures in Northwest Transylvania.
Figure 4.19: *Grubenhäuser* in Northwest Transylvania.
Figure 4.20: Rectangular post-built surface structures in Northwest Transylvania.
Figure 4.21: Surface structure with timber walls at Hereclean-Dâmbul Iazului.
Figure 4.22: Possible Roman period rectilinear building identified from an aerial photograph.
Figure 4.23: Roman period village at Zalău-Mihai Vitezul Blvd.
Figure 4.24: Reinterpretation of Construction 1/Dwelling 5 at Zalău-Mihai Viteazul Blvd.

Figure 4.25: Possible multi-period settlement at Soporu de Câmpie from aerial photograph.
Figure 4.26: Villa plans in Northwest Transylvania. Textured rooms indicate hypocaust installations
Figure 4.27: Layouts of three excavated villas.
Figure 4.28: Phases of villa building and bath complex at Chinteni-Tulgheş.
Figure 4.29: Similar tripartite division of space in urban dwellings at Porolissum and military baths in the area.
Figure 4.30: Percentages of agricultural potential within the area of a one-hour walk from hillfort.
Figure 4.31: Agricultural potential for Roman military bases and towns.
Figure 4.32: Animal bone assemblages for Late Iron Age settlements within the study area.
Figure 4.33: Triangular graph showing relative percentages of cattle, sheep/goat and pig bones from Late Iron Age (1st century BC-1st century AD) settlements in Dacia.
Figure 4.34: Animal bone assemblages from Roman period settlements within the study area.
Figure 4.35: Triangular graph showing relative percentages of cattle, sheep/goat and pig bones from Roman period settlements in Dacia.
Figure 4.36: Animal slaughter ages at Porolissum.
Figure 4.37: Mineral and stone exploitation in relation to nucleated or high-status settlements and major rivers.
Figure 4.38: Roman period sites with Dacian handmade wares.
Figure 5.1: Burial evidence for the pre-Roman period.
Figure 5.2: Burial evidence for the Roman period.
Figure 5.3: Burial evidence for the post-Roman period.
Figure 5.4: Location of cemetery and other burials at Porolissum
Figure 5.5: Burials in Building OL5 at Porolissum.
Figure 5.6: Location of burials and evidence for spiritual life at Potaissa.
Figure 5.7: Location of burials and evidence for spiritual life at Napoca.
Figure 5.8: Soporu de Câmpie cemetery, Phases I and II.
Figure 5.9: Soporu de Câmpie cemetery, fifth century.
Figure 5.10: Ritual pit deposits in Free Dacia and the Meseş Gate and Şimleu areas.
Figure 5.11: Features with animal bones, pottery and human remains at Măgura Moigradului.
Figure 5.12: Deposition in structure and burnt pits at Zalău-Mihai Viteazul Blvd.
Figure 5.13: Burials and altar at Ciumăfaia villa.
Figure 5.14: Settlements with evidence for votive activity in the province.
Figure 5.15: Apsidal structure containing three ritual depositions at Şimleu-Observator.
Figure 5.16: Location of shrine to Nemesis at the amphitheatre of Porolissum.
Figure 5.17: Location of Complex to Jupiter Dolichenus (LM1S) along road.
Figure 5.18: Location of Temple to Bel/Liber Pater/Christian church along road at Porolissum.
Figure 6.1: Micro-regional study areas
Figure 6.2: Late Iron Age activity in the Meseş Gate.
Figure 6.3: Roman period activity in the Meseş Gate.
Figure 6.4: Roman period land-use in the Meseş Gate
Figure 6.5: Latest coins at settlements according to Reece's (1991: 12) phasing at the Meseş Gate.
Figure 6.6: Late Iron Age activity in the Şimleu Depression.

Figure 6.7: Slope and Late Iron Age activity in the Șimleu Depression.
Figure 6.8: Roman period activity in the Șimleu Depression.
Figure 6.9: Water risk and Roman period activity in the Șimleu Depression.
Figure 6.10: Mass of silver finds at sites in the Șimleu Depression.
Figure 6.11: Late La Tène activity in the Someșul Mic River Valley.
Figure 6.12: Roman period activity in the Someșul Mic River Valley.
Figure 6.13: Roman period architectural elaboration in the Someșul Mic River Valley.
Figure 6.14: Post-Roman activity in the Someșul Mic River Valley.
Figure 6.15: Latest coin issues in the valley using Reece's (1991: 12) phasing.
Figure 6.16: Late Iron Age activity in the Potaissa area.
Figure 6.17: Roman period activity in the Potaissa area.
Figure 6.18: Legionary stamps at Roman settlements in the Potaissa area
Figure 6.19: Architectural elaboration of Roman period settlement in the Potaissa area.
Figure 6.20: Land-use in Roman period Potaissa area.
Figure 6.21: Post-Roman activity in the Potaissa area.
Figure 7.1: Schematic plan of Late Iron Age landscape of Northwest Transylvania.
Figure 7.2: Schematic plan of Roman landscape of Northwest Transylvania.
Figure 7.3: Schematic plan of post-Roman landscape of Northwest Transylvania.

Chapter 1: Introducing Roman Dacia

> Qui Traiani gloriae invidens statim provincias tres reliquit, quas Traianus addiderat, et de Assyria, Mesopotamia, Armenia revocavit exercitus ac finem imperii esse voluit Euphraten. Idem de Dacia facere conatum amici deterruerunt, ne multi cives Romani barbaris traderentur, propterea quia Traianus victa Dacia ex toto orbe Romano infinitas eo copias hominum transtulerat ad agros et urbes colendas. Dacia enim diuturno bello Decibali viris fuerat exhausta.
>
> Envying Trajan's glory, [Hadrian] immediately gave up three of the provinces which Trajan had added, withdrawing the armies from Assyria, Mesopotamia, and Armenia and deciding that the Euphrates should be the boundary of the empire. When he intended to act similarly with regard to Dacia, his friends dissuaded him, lest many Roman citizens should be left in the hands of the barbarians, because Trajan, after he had subdued Dacia, transplanted an infinite number of men from the whole Roman world to the country and the cities there. Indeed, Dacia had been exhausted of people in the long war with Decebalus.
>
> Eutropius viii. 6

In a few lines, Eutropius, writing in the second half of the fourth century, created an image of Roman Dacia, comprising much of modern Romania, which resonates in the modern period like few others: a country with its native population utterly destroyed by invasion and populated by intrusive peoples. It is an image that has served both imperialist and nationalist alike over the course of the past two centuries, as it illustrates simultaneously Roman patronage and cruelty, and the benefits and horrors of imperialism. At the heart of any analysis of Roman Dacia are questions about our own contemporary experiences with imperialism and hegemony, and this investigation into a part of this former territory is no exception. By utilising different forms of archaeological evidence for the reconstruction of the ancient landscape, this study shows how the ancient landscape and the communities which inhabited it changed in response to and as a result of the Roman invasion and occupation.

1.1. Research aims

There are no 'typical' Roman provinces, but Dacia is one of the most unique given its short life-span as an imperial possession; and as such it offers the unique opportunity to observe the processes of provincialisation. This thesis evaluates the effects of Roman organisation on the landscape in the present-day Romanian counties of Cluj and Sălaj, nestled in the northwest area of Transylvania at one of the most important passages through the Carpathian Mountains into Western Europe. The specific questions which drive the research are:

- What effects did the Roman occupation and colonisation of Northwest Transylvania have on the landscape over time?
- How were local communities structured in Northwest Transylvania and how did they change from the first through fifth centuries AD?

The first question explores the impact that Roman occupation had upon settlement forms and patterns in the broader landscape. The presence of military forts and personnel, vast fortifications, and the expansion of cities did more than change settlement patterns and material culture; they shaped a new society. This question is explored through the examination of individual settlements, villages, towns, forts, and fortifications in the context of their wider landscapes. The second component to this investigation is an examination of the social aspects of the landscape. By looking at the forms, configurations, resource usage and other practices of the settlements which have been excavated, we may begin to develop a picture of how the wider community was structured and how it changed as a result of both internal and external stimuli.

As Roman Dacia is a province with an already substantial bibliography, there is a need to justify yet another study. The remaining parts of the introduction are devoted to this. The first part consists of the traditional narrative history of ancient Dacia, wherein some of the more important *lacunae* become apparent. The second part identifies how these very *lacunae* have usually been addressed in the context of modern

research paradigms in Romania. The final part shows why now in particular, as opposed to even ten years ago, is full of opportunities to gather and access new data in this important area of Eastern Europe.

1.2. The historical narrative of Roman Dacia

A detailed historical analysis of ancient Dacia is beyond the scope of this research, but it is necessary to place the ancient landscape of Northwest Transylvania into a broader context. Such a discussion derives much of its information from the problematic written and epigraphic sources of Greek, Roman and Byzantine authors. Supplementing this information are two monuments depicting the events of the Dacian Wars. The more famous monumental column of Trajan in Rome, dedicated in AD 113, portrays many formulae of imperial propaganda art, but the historical events depicted on the column were derived from Trajan's own *commentarii,* which are now lost (Lepper and Frere 1988). As a glorification of the emperor and his army, it is subject to many of the same problems as the textual sources. The *tropaeum* at Tropaeum Traiani (modern Adamklisi) also is both informative and misleading. This monument was dedicated to Mars the Avenger, and incorporates a moralistic narrative focusing on the vengeance of Rome upon local aggressors and their allies (Richmond 1982: 51-52).

Although beset with problems, no study of Northwest Transylvania would be complete without incorporating the ancient written and epigraphic sources. Most sources characterise the native inhabitants as exotic savages living in an impoverished land (*e.g.*, Sen. *Prov*. iv. 4). Like other peoples just beyond the borders of the Empire, however, they are also seen as noble savages who once were uncorrupted until civilisation arrived in the form of Greek traders on the Black Sea (Strabo vii. 3. 8). The Dacians bring demise upon themselves, as a result of their insatiable greed, a stereotype

of colonised peoples not unlike that found in early accounts of indigenous peoples in North America (*e.g.*, Cooper's (1859) *Notions of the Americans*). The events derived from these sources are summarised in Table 1.1.

1.2.1. Late La Tène geography and politics

The Dacians, also known as the Getae, are generally regarded as a people related culturally and linguistically with the Thracians. Strabo (vii. 3. 12) notes a geographical distinction between the Dacians and the Getae, though for the purposes of this discussion they are seen as one and the same. Herodotus (iv. 93) places them between the Balkan Mountains and the Danube when accounting Darius' march of conquest. Strabo (vii. 3. 11) states that they cover an area which stretches from Pontus to Germany and the sources of the Danube. They were trading with the Greeks by the fourth century BC, and became objects of interest for Greek writers (Glodariu 1976).

Herodotus (iv. 93-97), writing in the fifth century BC, provides the earliest and the most colourful description of the Dacians, mainly in regards to their religious practices. Disregarding these 'factoids' very little is known about how people were organised before this period. Strabo (vii. 3. 8) makes references to a king of the Getae who captures Lysimachus; but he also speaks of *poleis*, projecting familiar terms onto unfamiliar socio-political entities. A Hallstatt influence in the early Iron Age may help explain the building of fortified settlements on hilltops, the so-called *oppidum* culture, throughout the first century BC, but the social and political causes and consequences of these are unknown. The appearance of silver-working and coin-minting also indicates changes in the concept of wealth. Greek coins were making their way into southern Transylvania in large quantity, though in north Transylvania their quantities are modest.

Table 1.1: Principal Events in Dacia from the 1st century BC to the 5th century AD: the evidence from written and epigraphic sources.

DATE	EVENT	SOURCE
82 BC	Earliest date in which Burebista holds power in Dacia	Jord. *Get*. 11. 67
74 BC	C. Scribonius Curio, governor of Macedonia, pursues Celtic Scordisci across Danube into Dacian territory but turns back	Flor. i. 39. 3; Eutr. vi. 2; Fest. *Brev*. vii
72 BC	M. Terentius Varro Lucullus, governor of Macedonia, conquers west-Pontic Greek cities	Eutr. vi. 10; Fest. *Brev*. vii;
c. 60 BC	War between Dacians under Burebista and Boii and Taurisci under Critasirus	Strabo vii. 3. 11, 5. 2
c. 59 BC	C. Antonius, governor of Macedonia, attacks Dacian city, and is defeated by Bastarnian Scythians who come to their aid	Cass. Dio xxxviii. 10. 3; Livy *Epit. per*. 103
55 BC	Burebista conquers Olbia	Dio Chrys. *Or*. 26. 6
49/48 BC*	Burebista sends Akornion of Dionysopolis as an ambassador to Cnaeius Pompeius of Rome; Burebista sides with Pompeius	App. *B Civ*. 2. 51; Akornion Inscription (*SIG* no. 762; Sherk 1984, no. 78)
c. 44 BC	Burebista is assassinated and his empire divided	Strabo vii. 3. 11
c. 36-31 BC	Octavian betroths his daughter Julia to Dacian leader Cotiso, requesting his daughter for himself	Flor. ii. 28; Suet. *Aug*. 63; Hor. *Carm*. ii. 18. 8
35-33 BC	Octavian makes plans to set out against Dacians from Segestica	App. *Illyr*. 22, 23; Strabo iv. 6. 10, vii. 5. 2
31 BC	Dicomes of the Getae promises aid to Antonius against Octavian	Cass. Dio lii. 22. 4; Plut. *Vit. Ant*. 63-4
29-28 BC	M. Licinius Crassus conquers Dobrudja with the help of Dacian leader Rholes and the city of Callatis; Rholes receives support against rival Dacian leader Dapyx	Cass. Dio li. 23-27; Livy *Epit. per*. 134; Flor. ii. 26. 13-16.
c. 10-9 BC	Dacians cross over the Danube and loot Pannonia; Tiberius reduces them to submission	Augustus, *RG* 30; Cass. Dio liv. 36. 2-3; Eutr. vii. 9; Flor. i. 28. 18; Suet. *Aug*. 21
AD 6	Dacians and Sarmatians attack Moesia under governor Caecina Severus	Cass. Dio lv. 36. 2
11-12	S. Aelius Catus, governor of Macedonia, attacks Dacian settlements in southern Muntenia; Dacians are moved to Thrace	Strabo vii. 3. 10
c. 12	Dacians attack across Danube	Oros. vi. 22
c. 15	Dacians take Troesmis, which is recaptured by L. Pomponius Flaccus, governor of Moesia	Ov. *Pont*. iv. 9. 76-80
c. 37	Dacians attack Moesia	Suet. *Tib*. 41
57-67	T. Plautius Silvanus Aelianus, governor, moves Transdanubian families into Moesia and forces them to pay tribute	CIL XIV, 3608=ILS 986
69 Spring	Dacians attack Romans south of Danube; they are countered by the 6th legion and additional troops from the army of Vitellius	Tac. *Hist*. i. 2, iii. 46
85-86 Winter	Dacians invade Moesia and defeat Roman army, killing governor Oppius Sabinus; Duras-Diurpaneus cedes Dacian throne to Decebalus; Domitian sends expedition against the Dacians	Eutr. vii. 23; Jord. *Get*. xiii; Suet. *Dom*. 6

DATE	EVENT	SOURCE
87	Decebalus defeats Roman army under Cornelius Fuscus, who is killed; Domitian sends out a second expedition	Cass. Dio lxvii. 6; Eutr. vii. 23; Jord. *Get*. xiii; Suet. *Dom*. 6
88	Tetius Iulianus, governor of Moesia, defeats Decebalus at Tapae	Cass. Dio lxvii. 10. 1-3
89	Domitian concludes treaty with Decebalus through Diegis, which includes giving money and artisans to the Dacians	Cass. Dio lxvii. 10. 7; Mart. *Epig*. v. 3
101-102	Trajan attacks Dacians at Tapae and occupies Haţeg depression; Rhoxolani and Bastarni join Dacians and attack Lower Moesia; Trajan advances westward and seizes Sarmizegetusa; Decebalus surrenders	Cass. Dio, lxviii. 6, 8, 9; Eutr. viii. 2; Plin. *Pan*. xii
105-106 Summer	Trajan invades Dacia once again; Trajan defeats Dacians at Sarmizegetusa; Decebalus commits suicide; Dacia is annexed by the Roman Empire	Cass. Dio lxviii.
117	Iazyges and Rhoxolani coordinate attack on Dacia, killing the governor; they are defeated but land in the Banat is given up	SHA *Hadr*. vi. 6
c. 120	Dacia is reorganised into three provinces, Dacia Inferior, Dacia Superior, and Dacia Porolissensis	Gherla military diploma (Daicoviciu and Protase 1961)
156-157	Antoninus Pius wages war with Free Dacians in Dacia Porolissensis and eastern Dacia Superior	Arist. *Or*. xxvi. 70; CIL iii. 1061, 1416
c. 170	Marcomanni invade Dacia and threaten Sarmizegetusa	CIL iii. 7969
c. 171	M. Claudius Fronto, commander of armies of Moesia Superior and the three Dacias, dies in battle with Iazyges and Roxolani	CIL vi. 1377=ILS 1098
260-268	Much of Dacia is lost to the Romans under Gallienus	Eutr. ix. 8
271	Aurelian withdraws Romans from Dacian provinces	SHA *Aurel.* 39
c. 271-291	Carpi enter Transylvania, driving people across the Danube	Lactant. *De mort.* ix
294-296	Diocletian secures the Danube frontier, making operations against the Carpi, who are subsequently re-settled in Pannonia	Amm. Marc. xxviii. 1. 5; Aur. Vict. *Caes.* xxxix. 43
c. 306-311	Galerius wages war on Carpi and subdues them	Euseb. *Hist. eccl.* viii. 17. 3
323	Rausimod leads Goths in Dacia across Danube into Thrace; Constantine drives them back	*Exc. Val.* v. 17
328-336	Constantine re-takes southern Dacia from the Goths	Fest. *Brev.* xxvi; Julian *Caes.* 329c; AE 1934: 158;
332	Goths attack Sarmatians in Banat; Constantine II defeats Goths	*MGH AA* ix. 234; Zos. ii. 31. 3
c. 375/376	Huns conquer Scythia and Dacia; Goths settle on the Roman side of the Danube	Jord. *Get*. xxiv; Amm. Marc. xxxi. 4

*The year 49 is favoured for this embassy by Dittenberger and Von Gärtringen (1900) and Patsch (1932); 48 is favoured by Crişan (1978), Daicoviciu (1960), Kalinka (1906), Pippidi and Berciu (1965), and Seure (1911).



Figure 1.1: Possible extent of Burebista's influence by mid-first century BC.

The Late La Tène period in Transylvania is generally regarded as the period of greatest Dacian political expansion, leading to continual conflict with Rome from the first century BC to the Second Dacian War in the early second century AD. In the early first century BC, the Dacian king Burebista embarked on an aggressive policy of conquest toward neighbouring areas. The new acquisitions included lands controlled by the tribes of the Boii, Taurisci, and possibly the Scordisci to the west; parts of Thrace to the south; and west-Pontic Greek colonies from Olbia to Apollonia (Fig. 1.1). This rapid expansion in all directions, along with Burebista's meddling in the war between Julius Caesar and Pompey, did not go unnoticed. Caesar was planning an expedition against the Dacians, but in *c*. 44 BC both Caesar and Burebista were assassinated before the

invasion could take place. Burebista's kingdom was reportedly split into four parts, and later five, while Rome was plunged into its third civil war (Strabo vii. 3. 11).

There is evidence for large-scale political centralisation in Dacia in the early first century BC associated with Burebista's rise to power. Dacian hillforts of the first century BC are positioned at major crossing points into Transylvania, arguably implying some kind of central decision-making (Diaconescu 2004: 126). In the Orăştie Mountains, there is a carefully planned and unitary defensive system, consisting of six hillforts and earth and stone walls (Sarmizegetusa Regia, modern Grădiştea Muncelului). Many of the elements were at least begun around the time of Burebista (Crişan 1978).

Strabo (vii. 5. 3), drawing from Herodotus' account of Zalmoxis, relates some important information about how religion may have changed under Burebista. Decaeneus, a magician, was used by the Dacian king Burebista to 'secure the complete obedience of his tribe'. The Dacians were 'persuaded to cut down their vines and to live without wine' (Strabo vii. 3. 11). In this way, Strabo describes a theocracy, with Decaeneus as a high priest who has acquired enough prestige with his skills of divination that he became a representative of god, and finally a god himself. Over the course of about a century, the Zalmoxis cult changed from a belief system to an organised religion which would last until the time of Decebalus.

Jordanes (xi. 67-71) relates information about possible changes in social structure which are corroborated on Trajan's Column and his *tropaeum*. Decaeneus reportedly selected individuals of noble birth to train in matters of theology, naming them *pileati* ('felt cap wearers'); and everyone else subsequently became known as *capilati* ('hairy ones'). The source may refer to a formalisation of social stratification, which occurred under political centralisation. On both monuments which document the

war of AD 105-106, over a century and a half after Burebista's reign, some Dacian men are depicted wearing caps while others are bearded with long hair. Trajan's physician Krito also indicates a bipartite division of labour in Dacian society between those who 'work with oxen' and those, 'belonging to the king's retinue', who 'were responsible for the fortifications' (FGrH ii. B3. 200). The dual-class system fits very well within a Roman understanding of the world; but it cannot be ruled out since it coincides with the appearance of large hillforts and rich hoards in the archaeological record.

In the wake of Burebista's demise, Crişan (1978), Diaconescu (2004), and Glodariu (2000) argue that multiple territorial centres of control replaced the central authority. The distribution of occupied Dacian citadels near every major passage into Transylvania reflects coherence and planning which, Diaconescu (2004: 122-128) argues, can only have been achieved by centralised decision-making from functionaries of royal circles. These citadels looked inward as well as outward, raising tribute, controlling trade, and regulating resource extraction, such as gold. Alternatively, Kris Lockyear (2004) argues for increasing regional diversity, with distinct groups controlling small areas, differentiating themselves by their construction techniques, coin usage, sanctuaries, and burial traditions.

Whatever the truth, there were clearly multiple Dacian leaders, and the Romans initially attempted a policy of diplomacy with them, drawing them into the civil conflicts of the late first century BC. Octavian sought an alliance through the marriage of his daughter to one of the Dacian leaders, Cotiso (Suet. *Aug*. 63.2; Hor. *Carm*. ii. 18. 8; Flor. ii. 28. 18). A group of gold coins (*staters*) inscribed with the word "ΚΟΣΩΝ", traced to Transylvania are thought to be evidence for such relations (Crawford 1974: no. 1701). These coins are generally taken to be the only gold Dacian issue, although it draws from Roman iconography and possibly the Greek title of *basileus* (Bahrfeld

1912; Iliescu 1990; Cojocaru *et al.* 2000). However, at one point Augustus sought to set out against the Dacians, implying that relations had gone sour between him and one or more of the Dacian leaders (App. *Illyr*. 22, 23; Strabo iv. 6. 10; vii. 5. 2). Dacian leaders also offered support to Antonius in the third civil war (Cass. Dio lii. 22. 4; Plut. *Vit*. *Ant*. 63-64); and after Antonius' defeat, another Dacian leader had assisted Roman operations in Dobrudja (Cass. Dio li. 23-27; Livy *Per.* 134; Flor. ii. 26. 13-16). These actions illustrate variability in attitudes toward Rome from Dacian power centres.

After a combined attack between Dacians and Sarmatians on Moesia, diplomatic manipulation of Dacian leaders was no longer an option. In 11 BC, the Emperor sent an army to the Black Sea region to put an end to the incessant raids into the Roman provinces of Moesia and Thrace. Although these raids ended for a time, as the Emperor boasts in the *Res Gestae* (30), raids were once again taking place under the reign of Tiberius (Ov. *Pont*. iv. 9. 76-80; Suet. *Tib*. 41). Both parties crossed the Danube several times for purposes of intimidation and plunder.

By the late first century AD, written sources indicate that the Dacians from Transylvania became politically centralised again. Under Duras-Diurpaneus they killed the governor of Moesia in the winter of 85-86, prompting Domitian to send a full-scale expedition against them (Eutr. vii. 23; Jord. *Get*. xiii; Suet. *Dom*. 6). It was during this time that the throne of Dacia was ceded to Decebalus (or Decebal), who defeated the Roman army and killed its general. A second expedition was successful and the Romans and Dacians concluded a treaty in 89, though it involved many Roman concessions such as the paying of money and artisans (Cass. Dio lxvii. 10. 7; Mart. *Ep*. v. 3).

Decebalus built up the capital at Sarmizegetusa Regia with the help of these resources. Whether the Dacians or the Romans were interested in honouring peace is a matter of debate (Lepper and Frere 1988: 282-289). It is clear that both parties felt their

frontier threatened, but by the reign of Trajan the Romans may have had additional reasons for an invasion, including low morale among the Danube legions and the emperor's need for *gloria* and *fama* (Lepper and Frere 1988: 277-281). Trajan invaded Dacia in AD 101, as the Dacians were joined by their allies the Sarmatian Rhoxolani and German Bastarni. By AD 102 he had occupied the capitol Sarmizegetusa, forcing the surrender of Decebalus. However, raids reportedly continued, instigating a Second Dacian War which succeeded in destroying the Dacian kingdom. Decebalus committed suicide, the intra-Carpathian region was annexed as the Roman province of Dacia, and all the hillforts and religious structures of the Dacians within the territory were destroyed. Decebalus' head was displayed at the camp of Ranisstorum (Speidel 1970: 142-143).

1.2.2. Roman occupation

The Romans secured control over central and southern Dacia, which corresponds to most of modern Transylvania and Oltenia. Free Dacia to the north, west and east was not incorporated into the province, though control was certainly exerted in different forms over the area. Roman organisation of Dacia proceeded swiftly: economic resources were secured, military camps and road networks were constructed, and the foundations for cities in the western area of the province were laid. Attacks from the Sarmatian Rhoxolani from the east and the Iazyges from the west prompted Hadrian to reorganise Dacia into three provinces, Dacia Superior, Dacia Inferior, and Dacia Porolissensis, the latter of which was a heavily fortified area securing the most important passage through the Carpathians to the north and west (Daicoviciu and Protase 1961).

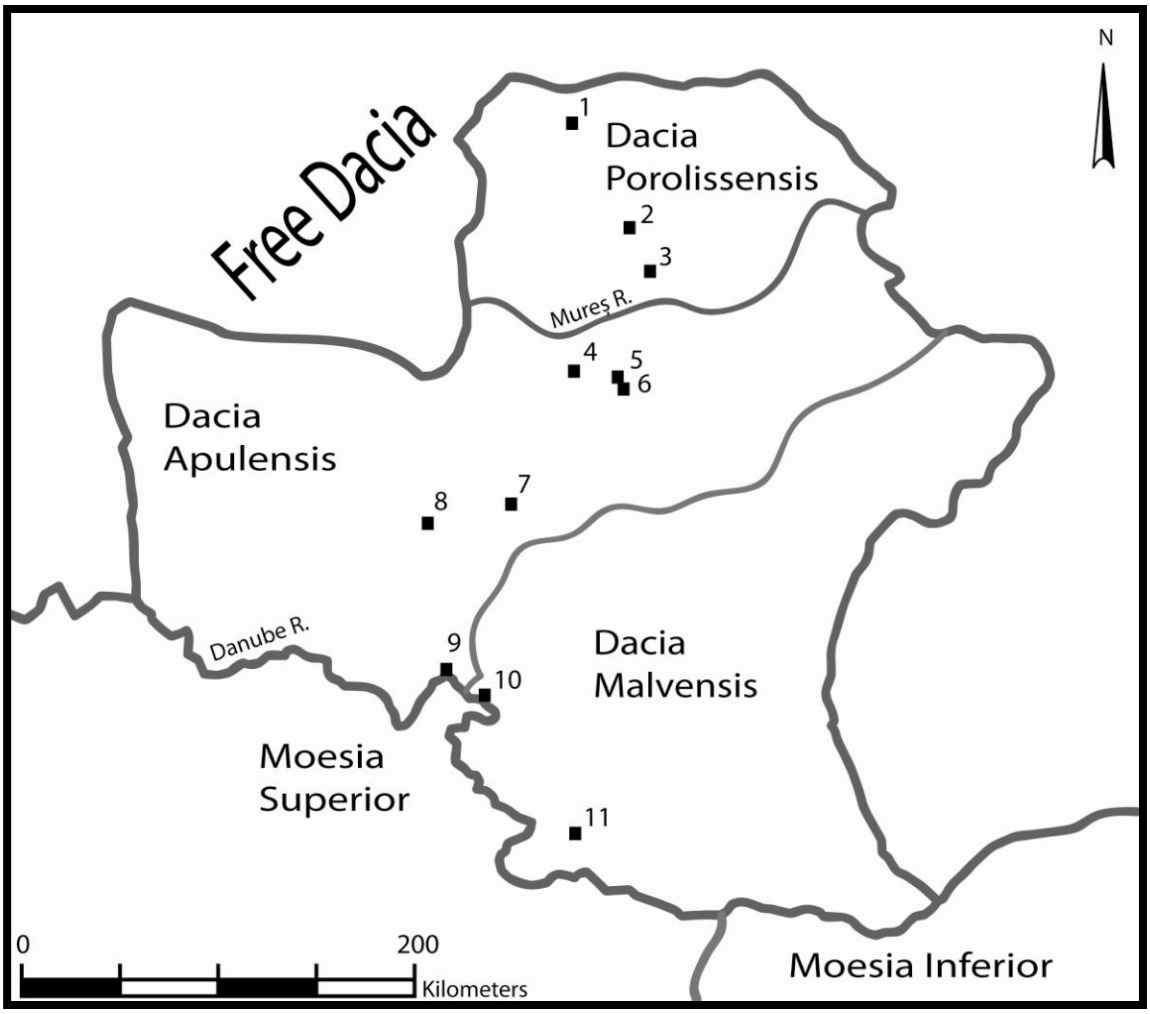


Figure 1.2: Late second century Roman Dacia with major urban centres indicated. 1) Porolissum; 2) Napoca; 3) Potaissa; 4) Ampelum; 5) Municipium Septimium Apulens 6) Colonia Aurelia Apulensis; 7) Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa; 8) Tibiscum; 9) Dierna; 10) Drobeta; 11) Romula

The permanent presence of the Roman army in Dacia, a finger-like projection into Barbaricum beyond the Danube, was probably what spurred a number of different populations to ally with one another. The Rhoxalani, the Iazyges, as well as the 'Free Dacians' to the northwest continued to threaten order on the frontiers of the Dacian provinces, and these dangers were magnified by the coalition of the Marcomanni. The provinces were again reorganised into Dacia Apulensis, Dacia Malvensis and Dacia Porolissensis (using the similar boundaries as before) under the command of a single governor and his two senatorial subordinates to better coordinate defences under Marcus Aurelius (Daicoviciu and Protase 1961; Daicoviciu and Daicoviciu 1967) (Fig.

1.2). It was a single province again, called *Tres Daciae* separated into domains under three financial procurators. The Marcomanni invaded the province and threatened Roman Sarmizegetusa, and the Iazyges and Rhoxolani also defeated the Roman armies of Dacia and killed their commander. Order was restored with the conclusion of the Marcomannic Wars.

Towns were established throughout Dacia, the most important of which was Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, the only *colonia deducta* in the province under Trajan and its first capital. Hadrian and Septimius Severus were the most active emperors in promoting urbanisation in Dacia, granting at least seven towns status upgrades. In Hadrian's case, this was likely to facilitate the division of the territory into three smaller provinces; but in Severus' time these grants probably had more to do with the military rewards and the organisation of a developed urban aristocracy.

An extensive system of frontier defence of timber and stone forts and fortlets, towers, earthworks and stone walls was constructed since no other European province had as long a border with Barbaricum. Up to 168 or 169, the *Legio XIII Gemina* was stationed at Apulum, the heartland of the province from which many areas of the frontier could be efficiently reached via the road network. Marcus Aurelius stationed *Legio V Macedonica* permanently at Potaissa to facilitate frontier defence against the Marcomanni.

That the wars of conquest took a significant toll on the population of Dacia is without doubt, a fact corroborated by Eutropius' quote at the beginning of this chapter. Literary sources state that Dacians were 'exhausted of men', 'annihilated', and 'destroyed in such a way that their entire people was reduced to forty men' (Eutr. viii. 6; Julian *Caes*. xxviii. 327c-d; Luc. Sam. *Schol*. xxiv. 16). Ioannes Lydus (*De Mag*. ii. 28) quotes Krito's figure of 500,000 'warlike men . . . with their arms' which were led out

of Dacia upon the conquest; however, this figure was reduced to much more realistic 50,000 on the basis of palaeography (Carcopino 1934: Chapter 2). The Roman sources indicate deliberate ethnic cleansing in the process of securing the territory. There is no indication of the fate of women and children in the province, but assumedly many were taken as wives and slaves. As a result, Dacia developed very differently from other provinces.

The post-war settlement of Dacia seems to have involved a massive immigration of Latin-speaking civilians. Although Aurelius Victor (xiii. 43) claims that many *coloniae* were founded, Ruscu (2004) has argued that this actually refers to colonists. The ancient author may have been influenced by the *coloniae* of Dacia in his own day, but was struck by the number of people coming into Dacia to re-people the landscape. This idea is supported by a rich tradition of specific local gods from other regions of the empire (Bărbulescu 1984; Sanie 1994; Schäfer 2004). The number of known names from other parts of the Empire on inscriptions from Dacia is large, representing a diverse population of foreigners in both forts and cities (Daicoviciu and Piso 1976; Piso 1993; Pop 1994; Ruscu 1998; Russu 1977; Sanie 1973).

In all of Roman Dacia, not a single epigraphic reference to a native *civitas* is known. Ruscu (2004) has argued that Dacia was an exception to the pattern of integration of indigenous communities in the Danube provinces, in that communities which continue into the Roman period do not become *civitates*, indicating a lack of an indigenous social stratum which is able to perform self-administration. This pattern differs from all other Danube provinces, where initially Roman administration incorporated indigenous communities as *civitates*, which were supervised by military officials called *praefecti civitatis*. Ruscu (2004: 78-83) connected this to a missing upper stratum of indigenous society. Epigraphic studies have also revealed that very few

Dacian names appear in inscriptions in Transylvania (Balla 1975; 1987; Bărbulescu 1994; Piso 1993). Ion Russu (1977) suggested that only three per cent of the anthroponyms found in Roman Dacia are Thraco-Getic.

These features of Roman provincial society and administration have led some to suggest that the upper echelon of Dacian society was completely destroyed in the occupied territory (*cf.* Ruscu 2004). This does not mean that the Dacians as a population were exterminated, but rather those that formed a small portion of society and expressed themselves in ways that are archaeologically conspicuous. The individuals who are traditionally associated with this stratum of society are the *pileati*, who, according to Jordanes (*Get*. v. 40) and Strabo (vii. 3. 5) are religious leaders; according to depictions on Trajan's Column they comprise the main part of the military (Cichorius Plates XCIX; CVIII; CIX); and according to Krito, are involved in administration (FGrH ii. B3. 200).

The destruction of Dacian temples and the lack of any evidence of religious continuity argue further for the disappearance of Dacian religious leadership. The destruction of the sanctuaries at Sarmizegetusa Regia were part of the policy of obliteration of the capital of the Dacians, but no religious structures in any part of Dacia appear to have been spared. No epigraphic inscriptions indicate indigenous pre-Roman divinities after the conquest, and very few votive inscriptions bear Dacian names in general (Babeş 2000; Bărbulescu 1984). Furthermore, funerary rituals are largely 'normalised' into cremation with a few grave goods after the Roman conquest after three centuries of regional variations (Babeş 2000; Sîrbiu 1993).

Linguistic studies suggest that 160 words in the modern Romanian language are of Dacian origin (Giurescu 1972), which does indicate some continuity of spoken language in the Roman period. These words include terms for the human body, the

family, agricultural, pastoral, viticultural, and piscicultural activities, the natural environment and flora. Survivals tend to refer to ancient terms used in everyday conversation, so these things should have been essential to the surviving Dacians. The Latin vocabulary in the Romanian language encompasses religious terms, military terms, and political terms, which would normally be associated with the *pileati*.

If linguistic studies make a case for continuity of rural life, archaeology has offered little support throughout Dacia. Some scholars subscribe to the idea that at the time of the Roman conquest, and into the Roman period, Dacians lived in small villages which are difficult to detect archaeologically (Nandris 1981; Diaconescu 2004). In Western Transylvania, the area with the most provincial towns, centuries of investigations have failed to locate with certainty a single one of these rural Dacian villages. In the eastern part of the province, with fewer urban centres, a few small villages have been excavated which continue occupation into the Roman period (Glodariu 1972; Glodariu 1981). In the same area, small groups of sunken dwellings appear with the establishment of the province, sometimes grouping around a pre-existing small dwelling. In the southeast, in the territory of Romula, some cemeteries are attributed to Dacians (Popilian 1980; 1982; Popilian and Nica 1998). The size of these cemeteries is not known, but Diaconescu (2004) suspects that they belonged to sizeable settlements.

1.2.3. Post-Roman migration and continuity

A recent study of coin issues by Găzdac (2002a) has suggested that most of Dacia was already abandoned by the Roman armies by the time of the sole rule of Gallienus (260-268), a situation which corresponds with a reference by Eutropius (ix. 8). Though the situation was dire in Dacia well before Aurelian came to power in the

third century, he is generally credited with the withdrawal of Roman control from the province. Archaeological evidence from different locations in the former province also indicates the presence and continuity of Roman traditions. Evidence of continued use of Roman cemeteries and structures at some Roman towns suggests that a post-Roman population remained after the departure of the armies. The written sources are mostly silent about intra-Carpathian Transylvania, but some authors relate new populations active across the Danube during this period, which has generally been interpreted in the broader *Völkerwanderung* framework.

The Carpi, a group related to the Dacians living to the east of the province entered Transylvania and drove people across the Danube in the wake of the Roman withdrawal, among them the mother of Galerius (Lactant. *De mont. pers*. ix). Aurelian in AD 272 and Diocletian in 296/7 both took the title *Carpicus Maximus* by defeating the Carpi and resettling them in Sopiana (modern Pécs, Hungary) in Pannonia (Aur. Vic. xxxix .43; Amm. Marc. xxviii. 1. 5). Though Aurelian's victory is regarded as crushing, the Carpi were not finished. Theodosius (AD 379-395) is reported to have repelled a combined force of Huns, Scirii and 'Carpo-Dacians', whom he compelled to return to the land across the Danube (Zos. iv. 114).

Another population attested in the former province is the Goths. In AD 375/376 the Emperor Valens invited tens of thousands of Goths into Roman territory on the south side of the Danube in modern-day Bulgaria to protect them from the Huns (Amm. Marc. xxxi. 4). It is likely that Gothic populations settled in Dacia in the late third century, but only in the Danube Valley. Archaeological evidence indicates that the Goths may have entered Transylvania toward the middle of the fourth century, when the so-called Sântana de Mureş-Černjachov culture traditionally associated with the Gothic

peoples appears in intra-Carpathian Transylvania (Harhoiu 1990; Heather and Matthews 1991: 54-56).

Huns, Vandals and Gepids are also reported to have dwelt in Dacia, though the Huns appear to have stayed close to the Danube. A few materials have been found in Transylvania, but there is no evidence that any significant settlements were established here. Vandals may have been in northern Transylvania since the Marcomannic Wars. Jordanes (i. 262) writes that the Gepids settled in the former Roman province of Dacia following the dissolution of Attila's Empire. The possibility of Gepids or Vandals in Transylvania is corroborated by the penetration of building traditions and burial rites in the fifth century which are found closer to the Tisza and in Germany (see 4.4).

Constantine's operations across the Danube into this multi-ethnic Dacia are related by Julian (*Caes*. 329c) and Festus (*Brev*. xxvi). Roman camps in Oltenia and the re-appearance of Roman coins in Transylvania serve as archaeological support for this aggressive and ambitious invasion (Tudor 1941; 1943; Găzdac 2002), though many of the details remain unknown. It is likely that the territory was once again abandoned following the death of Constantine, since only thirty years later there appears to be a substantial population of Goths living in this same area.

The lack of written sources for this period and the fact that archaeology has concentrated mostly on the Iron Age and Roman periods makes interpretation of any aspect of immediate post-Roman Dacia difficult. The most problematic issue is why no apparent power centres developed in the former Roman province. The appearance of certain Roman insignia and coins in burials in Transylvania (see 5.1) support the idea that the Empire maintained some level influence, if not control, though the exact nature of it is uncertain. Beyond the identification of certain populations which may or may not be present in post-Roman Dacia, this period more than any other reveals the limits of

relying on written sources. The culture, society and economy of Dacia in the fourth and fifth century rely solely on archaeological interpretation.

1.2.4. Gaps in the narrative

Issues such as the lives of non-combatant inhabitants of the frontier area and the nature of post-Roman society must be addressed if provincial archaeology is ever to mature in Romania. The most recent volume on Roman Dacia, Gudea and Lobüscher's *Dacia: eine römische Provinz zwischen Karpaten und Schwarzen Meer* (2006) illustrates this point. A review of the book notes that only three pages are devoted to the impact of intrusive populations on the native peoples; and that most of the content is devoted to *Romanisierung* implemented by the Roman army (Haynes 2008). A number or important works are either ignored or marginalised: Ioana Oltean and William Hanson's aerial survey (Hanson and Oltean 2000; 2002; 2003; Oltean 2007; Oltean and Hanson 2001), excavations of the Porolissum forum by Alexandru Matei and Eric De Sena (2005; 2007; 2008; 2009; Tamba *et al.* 2003), and Cristian Găzdac's (2002a; 2002b) study of monetary circulation in the province. It is not only for the sake of understanding Roman imperialism in an academic sense that archaeologists must push further, but for the sake of giving subjugated peoples their proper voice in history (Given 2004: 163-164).

1.3. The theoretical background to studies of Roman Dacia

Paradigms have been created to fill some of the gaping holes in the history provided by the written sources. The history of Romanian archaeology has already been discussed in a number of works in both Romanian and English (Condurachi and Daicoviciu 1971: 11-22; Ellis 1998: 221-225; Haynes and Hanson 2004: 27-29; Lockyear 2004: 33-35; Niculescu 2004-2005; Oltean 2007: 4-7; Vékony 2000: 1-32).

What follows is restricted to the development of Dacian and Roman archaeology in Romania, giving a context for some of the issues which have created academic inertia.

While Romanian archaeology developed along similar lines to Western Europe, it has only recently broken out from a culture-historical, site-based, Roman military-focused tradition. This is not due to a lack of interest in applying new analytical frameworks, or new technologies, as geophysical survey and aerial archaeology have readily been applied in recent years (see *infra*). The main reasons for this lingering preference are the specific nature of the legacy evidence and antiquarian reports that are now available in Romania; the rejection of the Marxist paradigm in the post-revolution years which emphasised social change; and the legacy of protochronistic research.

1.3.1. *Terra deserta* and antiquarianism

For a number of European powers in the 'Age of Nation-states', demonstrating lineage from Romans was as important in terms of political entities as it was in ethnic descent. Roman sovereignty in Romania was of primary importance to the Austro-Hungarian Empire validating its hold over Transylvania. In this regard, antiquarianism was firmly established within the territories of Romania from both within and without. Antiquarianism in Romania was characterised by collection and recording of sculptures and moveable heritage, frequently prioritised for its aesthetic characteristics rather than political importance, having much in common with the paradigm in other areas of Europe (Trigger 1989: Chapter 2).

This situation changed when Moravian philologist Robert Rösler (1871), following the history of Franz Joseph Sulzer published nearly a century before, proposed that the Romans had exterminated the native population of Dacia. Consequentially, the Romans left Dacia a *terra deserta* when they had withdrawn in AD

271, and thus modern Romanians had migrated into Romania in the tenth or 11th centuries from south of the Carpathians (*cf.* Ellis 1998).

At the same time, a powerful contemporaneous narrative was built up, ironically, by one of the instruments of Austrian control over Transylvania. Even as the Austrian Emperors saw the Uniate Church, which blended Eastern Orthodoxy with Roman Catholicism, as an instrument to advance their own control, the Romanians – or Wallachians as they were called – involved in the Church began to perceive themselves as the inheritors of the old Roman order (White 2000). The term ‘Romanian’ is based on a much older Turkish term, *rumlar*, used to describe the Byzantine inheritors of the Roman Empire whom the Ottomans conquered. Thus, ‘Rumanian’ was sometimes used to describe the people of this region. It was only in the 19th century that Romanian was expropriated to serve the interest of a new imagined community (White 2000 124-125).

Appeals for more rights within the Habsburg territory frequently drew attention to this, as the major political rights belonged to Saxons, Hungarians and Szeklers. In 1735 when Bishop Inochentie Micu-Klein asserted in a letter to the Habsburg emperor that ‘we are the oldest residents of Transylvania, (we) date back to the era of Emperor Trajan’ (Köpeczi 1986: 1016, cited in Vékony 1989: 21). This was also the position of Alexandru D. Xenopol (1884), professor of ancient history at Iaşi, who engaged in an intense debate with Rösler and his followers for a number of years.

The most vociferous dialogues about these matters remained confined to history and philology rather than archaeology and antiquarianism. The impact of this on the direction of archaeological theory in the 19th and early 20th centuries was minimal, and for the most part it took a route similar to Western Europe antiquarianism. The discovery of a number of archaeological hoards at the end of the 18th and early 19th centuries (Şimleu-Silvaniei, Conceşti, Pietroasa), now on display in major European

museums, stimulated the interest of a number of Romanian antiquarian scholars (*e.g.*, Odobescu 1889 on the Pietroasa treasure). At the same time, the foundation of the Museum and University of Cluj provided an impetus for the archaeological investigations of Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, Apulum, and Ilişua. Between the late 19th century and World War I, work and subsequent publications commenced at the town and associated triumphal monument of Tropaeum Traiani (Tocilescu 1895), the Romano-Byzantine fortress of Ulmetum and the Milesian colony of Histria (Pârvan 1912; 1923) and Roman villa sites (Mitrofan 1973). Though all of this work was focused on Greek and Roman sites, this was not a deliberate attempt by Romanian archaeologists (some of them of Hungarian ethnicity) to assert direct lineage from Roman people, but rather an antiquarian interest in excavating and recording a Classical past within the framework of written sources.

Romanian archaeology up until the First World War was characterised by antiquarianism that was ubiquitous throughout Europe and America. Although the idea of *terra deserta* was promoted in some disciplines, it did not have a strong influence on archaeological theory of its day. The reaction to it, however, had an important impact on how, why and where archaeology would be conducted over the following two decades. The 'impasse of antiquarianism', to quote Trigger (1989: 70), was namely the use of Roman and Greek historical sources as guides for the discipline of archaeology and thus the lack of an interpretative framework for prehistoric and post-Roman periods in the face of mounting evidence. Therefore a new paradigm emerged from the convergence between the interests of politicians and historians interested in refuting *terra deserta* to advance the case for a Romanian nation and archaeologists eager to explore pre-Roman civilisation which had largely been ignored by the top Romanian scholars.

1.3.2. Protochronism

Protocronism (deriving from the Greek πρωτο- and -χρονος, 'before time') was coined by Edgar Papu (1974: 8) as a literary paradigm in an article arguing that 'any number of Romanian literary developments chronologically precede similar achievements in other countries' (author's translation). This view was incorporated into historical and archaeological disciplines when in 1976 Nicolae Ceauşescu called for a revision of Romanian history on a new theoretical basis, emphasising the need to correct the 'grave errors [which] have been made in the interpretation of our history, of the formation of our people, of the language, and of the Romanian nation itself' during the Stalinist period (Maier 1977). The character of this paradigm in archaeology was defined by three important circumstances.

The first of these circumstances was the advent of prehistoric culture-historical archaeology brought about by the V. Gordon Childe's interest in the Danube. Childe (1925; 1929) built on the largely unpublicised work of geologists and palaeontologists in his famous works on the archaeology of the Danube area. Childe's (1929: v) insistence on a 'unitary area' defined by the distribution of material culture prompted Romanian archaeologists to excavate and research prehistoric sites and expand on their version of Danube and Carpathian area prehistory.

The advent of prehistoric archaeology and culture-history affected archaeological methodology. Vasile Pârvan, noted for his excavations at Histria, became increasingly interested in the genesis and development of Dacian culture and published his monumental work *Getica* (1926), which provided both reinterpretation of available evidence and an impetus for subsequent work. These years also saw properly organised excavations of the Dacian hillforts in the Orăştie Mountains (*e.g.,* Poiana Tecuci, Vulpe 1950).

Large-scale excavations of Roman sites continued, including the Roman towns of Sucidava (Tudor 1965a) and Drobeta (Tudor 1965b), both along the Danube. The most important excavation, however, was that of Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, carried out by Constantin Daicoviciu (1975: 39), who believed at the time that this site was the key in proving the survival of the Dacian population after the wars with Rome.

While this period realised the full potential of archaeological investigation and its implications on larger issues such as frontier studies and modern social identity, there were still certain constraints on the type of archaeology being practiced. Childe himself had focused attention on archaeological assemblages rather than archaeological change (Childe 1929: v-vi). While cultural diversity was recognised, the methodological and theoretical groundwork was laid for new forms of nationalistic archaeology.

A second factor in the creation of protochronism was the circulation of Soviet Marxist literature in Romania which emphasised materialism and social evolution. Archaeological interpretation drew heavily from Marxist evolutionary framework derived from Stalin's *Dialectical materialism and historic materialism*, which was one of the first Communist documents to be translated into Romanian (Stahl 1992). The political ideology focused research on social processes which cast both the Dacians and the Romans in a negative light (*e.g.*, Daicoviciu 1960; Macrea 1969).

When excavation stopped at Roman Sarmizegetusa, work there did not resume again until 1973. Besides occasional excavations at Romula, and rescue excavations at Apulum, Drobeta, and Napoca, no other research on the towns of Roman Dacia was undertaken. More attention was given to the indigenous working class of people, who were thought to have become servants of the estates of Roman colonists, giving rise to the nationalistic concept of an autochthonous population which would come to fruition in the 1970s (*e.g.* Constantinescu *et al.* 1975). As a result, excavations were conducted

at villages and rural cemeteries (Obreja, Soporu de Câmpie, Bratei, Cristeşti, Micăsasa), and some villas (Hobiţa, Deva, Sântămăria, Orlea, Aiud, Cinciş, and Chinteni). Over time, disinterest in a Roman past turned into deliberate destruction. The Roman town of Dierna (near modern Cerna) and the mining town of Ampelum (in the Western Carpathians) were destroyed in an effort to make Romania a modern industrialized state (Popa *et al.* 1972: 197).

The impact of Marxism on Romanian archaeology should not be underestimated. This paradigm would occupy an even more prominent position in the late 1970s and 1980s, as it interplayed with an increasing sense of nationalism. The theories of Marx and Engels were being cited as socio-historical facts, first principles upon which to develop historical and archaeological thought (*e.g.*, Crişan 1978: 94-112). Social and political struggle was seen as a causal phenomenon (*e.g.*, Bichir 1976: 152-160).

Most importantly, the driving force behind protochronism was the national consciousness of the post-war Romanian state which had been fomenting since the Romantic nationalism of the 19th century. The ideological argument that Romanians belonged in Transylvania, and that Transylvania belonged in Romania, was driven in part by aggression toward Rösler's followers in academia and in part by insecurity in the face of a substantial Hungarian population living there. This ideology had gained momentum since the inter-war period, but only became the dominant framework for Romanian archaeology under the reforms of Ceauşescu who was keen on using Dacia as a political tool to legitimise the independent state of Romania.

People who claimed Romanian nationhood lived in three different politically organised territories, Transylvania, Wallachia and Moldova. Michael the Brave managed to unify these territories for less than a year in 1600; but on account of its

brevity and its timing, it was an insufficient historical device (White 2000: 125-126). The Late Iron Age became the critical period for study, since it was then that the Dacian king Burebista supposedly acquired an empire which encompassed all three of these territories. The appearance of intricate metalwork and the citadels of the Dacians were believed to signify Dacian control over that area. Ion Crişan (1978: 248) described this empire as ‘a vast realm, a state, the most powerful ever known in “barbarian” Europe’. In the first chapter of the book, he portrays Dacians and Celts, both part of a broader La Tène culture, as co-existing in Dacia without cultural exchange (Crişan 1978: 11-30). The culture of the Dacians could not be diluted.

Though this period saw new important directions in archaeological research, the consequences of protochronism on archaeology were dire. A more diverse and thorough archaeological investigation within the Marxist paradigm, which had proven fruitful in other traditions, was not realised because of the political climate. A rift grew between classical archaeologists and Romanian Dacian archaeologists. Romanian archaeologists were basing their careers on exploring Dacian ‘statehood’ and the continuity of the ‘autochthonous population’ into and past the Roman period (*e.g.*, Daicoviciu 1975). Classical archaeologists refrained from interpreting anything which might challenge the idea of cultural continuity, Dacian supremacy, and the concept of the ‘autochthonous population’. In some respects this resulted in an archaeological isolationism. Consequently, the situation has been pejoratively labelled ‘Dacomania’ by Roman archaeologists (Haynes and Hanson 2004: 29). The problem of communication between these two academic communities was compounded by state restrictions on dissemination of accurate maps, security restrictions limiting the scope for aerial photography, and the absence of any systematic archaeological field-walking to identify sites.

With the 1989 revolution, this form of protochronism passed out of favour as a paradigm defining Romanian archaeology, but the its shadow still stands over historical works still being produced. In 2004, Gheorghe Niculescu wrote that the archaeology presented in the most recent volume of the *Istoria Romîniei* is:

> a local state of despondency to which the intervention of political priorities has contributed by discouraging the formation of professional validation criteria and procedures, which have dynamics of their own, and developing in a framework which is not that of the national state and being able to resist the imperatives of local political presents.
>
> (Niculescu 2004-2005: 124)

1.3.3. The Daco-Roman paradigm

The now-dominant paradigm in Romanian archaeology was never intended to be a compromise between the two extremes of protochronism and antiquarianism. Following the revolution, academic disciplines simply acknowledged that Romania owed a great deal of its cultural and linguistic heritage to the Romans (Fig. 1.3). This led to a greater acceptance of migration, both within the Roman period and afterward, as an agent of archaeological change. Without a formal rejection of some of the irreconcilable elements of protochronism, archaeology went on as usual with the exception that a growing number of Roman sites were opened or re-opened for excavation.

Besides reconciliation with a Roman past, the other key difference between archaeological interpretation before and after 1989 was the forthright rejection of Marxist explanations of social change. 'Romanization' a term which has come under considerable scrutiny across Anglo-American traditions of archaeology (*e.g.*, Mattingly 2006: 14-18), became important not simply on the basis of observable archaeological change, but because of its relationship to the formation of the modern Romanians. In the



Figure 1.3: Statues of Trajan and Decebalus in the city of Deva, portraying acknowledgement of a Daco-Roman heritage. Photo by author.

second volume of the *Istoria Românilor* series, romanization was hailed as a beneficial synthesis, the basis of the evolution toward 'Romanianness' (translated in Niculescu 2004-2005: 112).

The rejection of Marxism in archaeological studies has decentralised social change and processes that may have pushed Romanian archaeology in the direction of other European archaeologies. The primary agent of archaeological change in the Dacian, Roman, and especially post-Roman periods is still interpreted as migration (*cf.* Ciongradi 2004 and Schäfer 2004); and although migration is of great important in the story of ancient Dacia, this 'big picture' should not come at the expense of thinking about internal change, local choices and self-determination. Adrian Husar's (2002) recent volume on Roman Dacia argues that the Roman army played the most important role in the politics, administration and defence of the new province; the native elite were

not incorporated into this process; and massive colonisation played the most important role in the speed of provincialisation. These points are rightly emphasised, but to the extent that change originating from internal factors is marginalised. The study of the Roman *limes* in Northwest Transylvania is preoccupied with imperial defence policies, excluding discussions of local choices and practices.

The present state of Romanian archaeology – the questions asked, the methodology used and its theoretical framework – has been shaped by attention to the history provided by written sources and by the historical events of Romania which have impacted national ideologies. Recent years have seen a significant restructuring of antiquated theories, and this research is meant to serve that end.

1.4. Archaeological methodology and its limitations

The interpretations described above were ambitious attempts to reconstruct the past from a small but extraordinary corpus of data. An adequate exploration of the ancient landscape of Transylvania as a whole, comprising rural homesteads alongside urban and military settlement, has been hindered by the poor quality of the archaeological data as well as its limited circulation. This has prevented archaeologists from aggressively querying the evidence, for fear of pressing interpretations too far. Within the past decade, however, developments have made data more accessible and a more open academic environment has allowed new technologies and new sources of funding for better quality data.

Specific problems which have hindered broader understanding of the archaeological landscape are the lack of accessible maps of a suitable quality and the general practice of using local place-names to demonstrate the location of archaeological remains. This lack of good quality maps, due to national restrictions, is a

situation which is currently being rectified, as vector data is becoming more readily available. However, in combination with the second problem, this has created major issues in the accurate transmission of archaeological information. In many cases, local toponyms have been lost over time and are unrecoverable through any archives or older maps. This is a problem which must be rectified if Romanian landscape archaeology is ever to mature; however, even the online National Archaeological Record database (hosted by cIMeC) uses local toponyms rather than coordinates.

Four recent developments have shifted the focus of archaeological investigation in Dacia toward other areas of life, developing a more complete picture of the ancient landscape. First of all, new investigations into ancient urban centres have made necessary a number of important revisions to the history of these Roman towns. Since 1989, large-scale excavations have commenced at Aurelia Apulensis, Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, Napoca, Tibiscum and Porolissum (Étienne *et al.* 1990a; 1990b; 1994; Alicu *et al.* 1997; Alicu *et al.* 1994; Piso and Diaconescu, 1996; 1997; 1998; 1999; Cociş *et al.* 1995; Diaconescu, Haynes, and Schäfer 2001; De Sena 2009). Despite the urban focus of these excavations, they have helped to clarify a number of issues regarding the production and consumption of pottery across the entire landscape. Most notably, Apulum has benefitted for two decades from important studies of pottery production (Ciauşescu 2005; Ciauşescu 2006; Ciauşescu and Gligor 2006; Ruscu 1992**)** which have generated data which has been used to date and characterise economic activity at settlements within the countryside (Oarda-Şesu Orzii, Paul *et al.* 2005; Şeuşa-Cărarea Morii, Ciută *et al.* 2001; and Vinţu de Jos, Paul *et al.* 2006 and Paul *et al.* 2007).

Another important development which has helped to rectify problems of site location and to locate new sites was the programme of systematic aerial photography

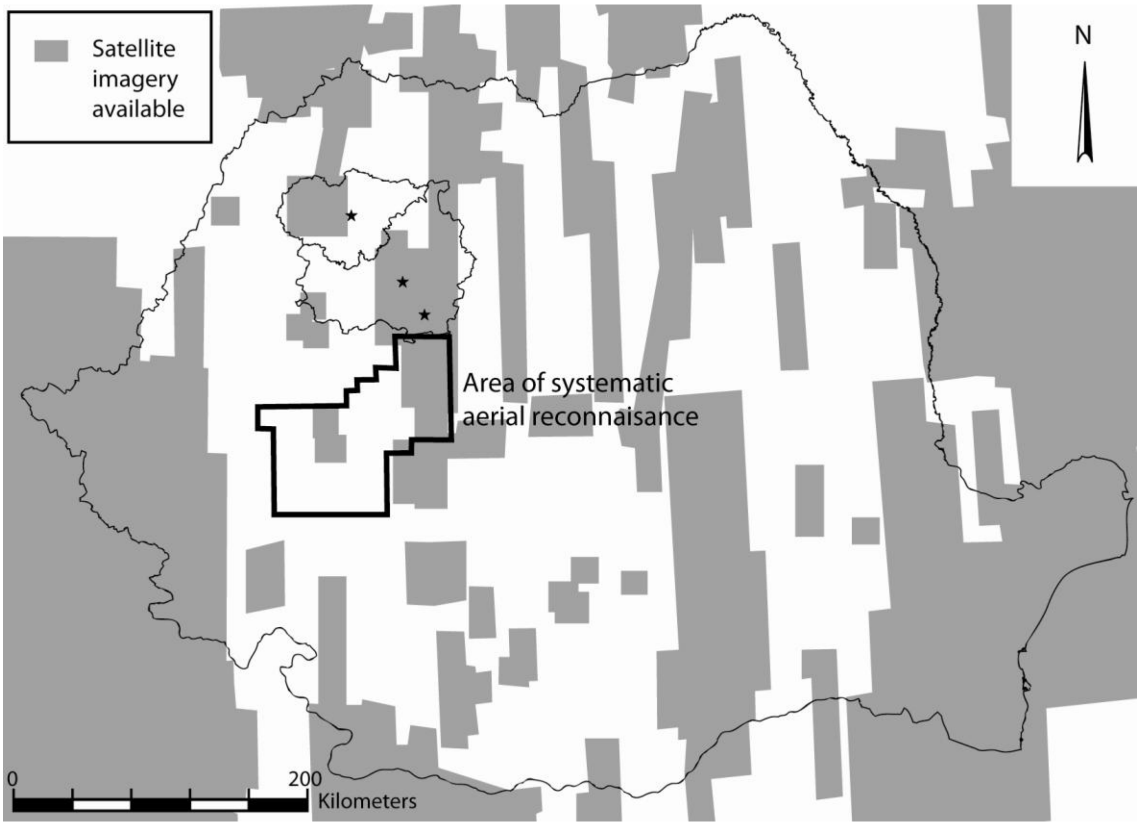


Figure 1.4: Aerial photograph and satellite imagery coverage of Romania. Based on Oltean (2007) and Google Earth (2010).

over the Mureş Valley, initiated in 1998 under W.S. Hanson and culminating in the publication of a monograph by I. Oltean (2007) revealing a large number of rural sites and small civilian settlements from antiquity (Fig. 1.4). Also employing declassified satellite imagery, no other study has featured such a comprehensive treatment of different settlement forms and patterns in the ancient landscape of Romania. As such, Oltean's monograph serves as a body of comparative data for this thesis, a point to which we return in Chapter 6. Important studies of materials have also emerged lately. As opposed to the archaeological corpora of the socialist regime, more recent studies of materials have benefitted from lengthier discussions of the broader implications in a more open academic environment (Negru 2003; Găzdac 2003; Gudea 2007). Finally, of greatest importance is cIMeC, the online database of archaeological research and sites, along with recent site reports which are updated every year. Until this website was

available, archaeologists interested in Romanian archaeology had to rely on sporadic reports in museum journals.

1.5. The necessity of re-evaluation

The current situation both allows and necessitates a re-evaluation of the archaeological evidence in ancient Transylvania in order to understand society in ancient Dacia. Gaps in the written sources have created archaeological gaps, occasionally filled by outlandish narratives serving various political interests. There has always been an historical interest in the rural populations of ancient Dacia and the structure of post-Roman society, but archaeology has usually ignored new evidence as it emerges in favour of traditional interpretations. Every year salvage excavations uncover more and more evidence of rural settlement, and research excavations bring us closer to understanding more substantial towns, hillforts and military bases. The significance of settlement and the landscape in the development of Roman Dacia can only be understood in the correct spatial and chronological context, for which available maps and new material studies prove to be invaluable. The following chapter outlines how such a study is achieved.

Chapter 2: Theory and Method

This chapter discusses the specific methods by which research and analyses were conducted in order to explore the effects of Roman occupation, and the theoretical background against which these are set. The first part of the chapter outlines the study area and period along with the reasons they were chosen. The second part highlights the key theoretical concepts which were utilised to explore the questions outlined in Chapter 1. The final part illustrates the method by which data were collected, organised and analysed.

2.1. Spatial and temporal context

The modern Romanian counties of Cluj and Sălaj in Northwest Transylvania cover much of the ancient Roman province of Dacia Porolissensis, and some of 'Free Dacia' to the north. Cluj county is 6,674 km², Sălaj county 3,864 km², giving a regional study area of 10,538 km² (Fig. 2.1). The reasons for using this study area are both practical and ambitious. In practical terms, there is a relatively large body of information available for this area. The northwest perimeter of the military frontier along the Meseş Mountains has been subject to a number of surveys and long-term excavations (Ferenczi 1941; 1959; 1967; 1968; 1971; Gudea 1979a; 1985; 1989; 1994; 1997a; 1997b; 1997c; 1997d; 1997e; Gudea and Tamba 2001; Bennett 2006; Matei 1996; 1997; Matei and Bajusz 1997; Tamba 1997). On the interior of the province a number of other long-term excavations have taken place at forts (Isac 1997; 2003); and beyond the frontier at Şimleu, an Iron Age hillfort complex (Pop *et al.* 2006). Urban

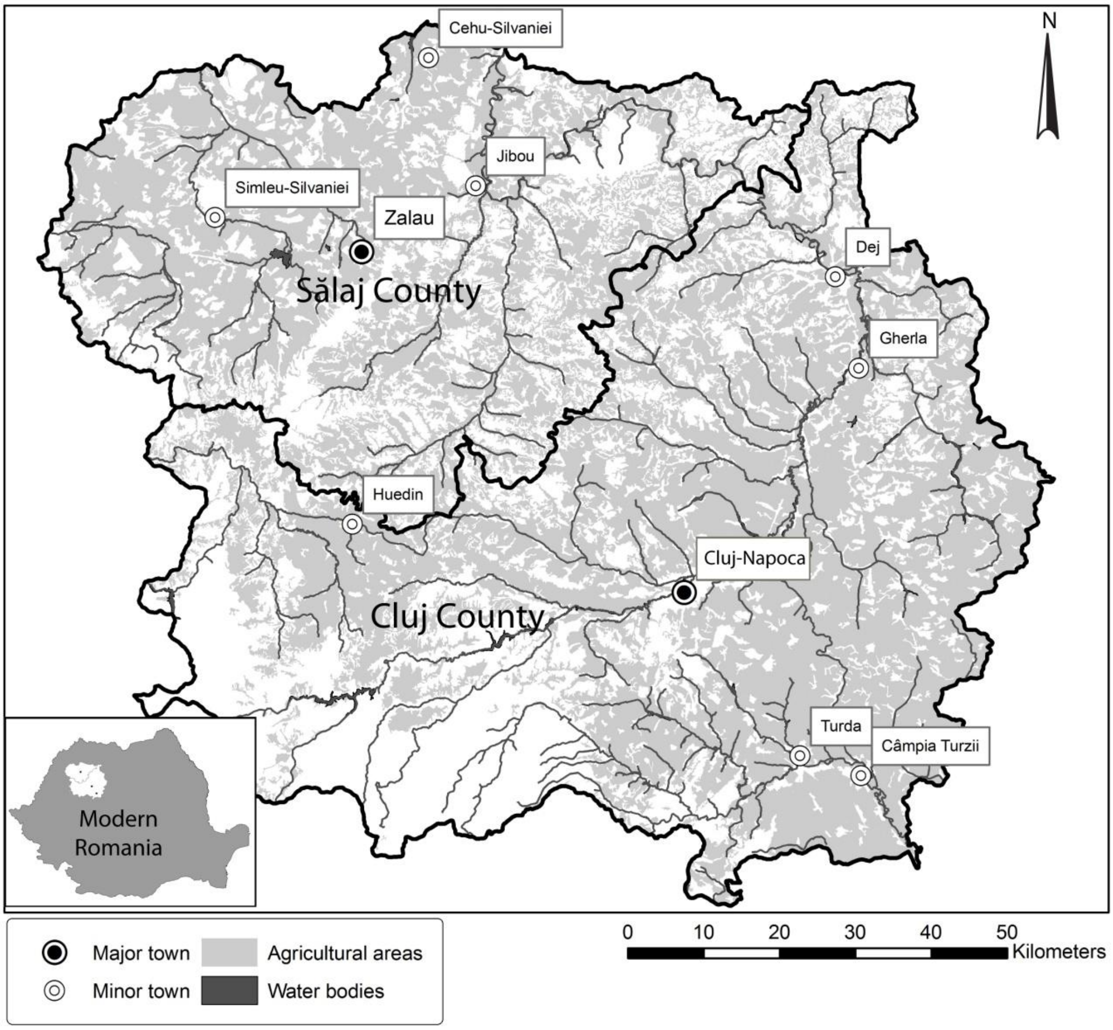


Figure 2.1: Cluj and Sălaj counties within modern Romania, showing important towns and modern 'agricultural area'. Land-use data after CLC2000 (©European Environment Agency 2007).

expansion and development, especially around the modern town or Cluj-Napoca, has generated numerous salvage excavations every year. Because archaeological work in these two counties has fallen under the influence of a small number of specialists, county repertories and online reports utilise a consistent language in terms of site descriptions and material typologies.

A more ambitious reason for the selection of this study area is that it provides important cross-sections of ancient life to compare and contrast. Iron Age fortified settlements are well-represented. In the Roman period, a large portion of Sălaj was

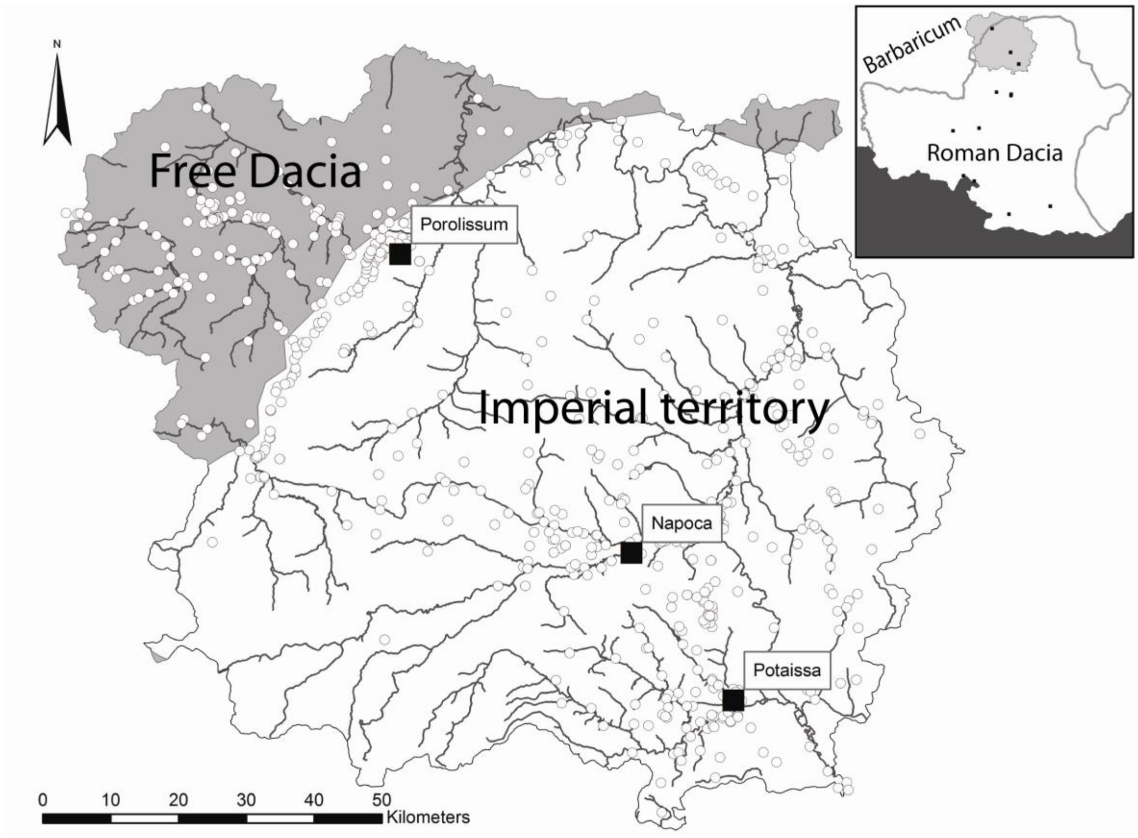


Figure 2.2: Study area within the Roman period. Squares indicate towns, dots indicate sites recorded.

never under direct imperial control, and life-ways in this portion of Free Dacia can be analysed and compared to contemporaneous settlement within the Empire (Fig. 2.2).

Within the study area three Roman towns and a large number of Roman fortifications. Besides these, the archaeological repertory records that this area contains the following sites from the Iron Age, Roman, and Migration Periods: six '*villae rusticae*', 11 necropoli, two salt mines, fifty settlements (including one 'rural settlement'), two isolated tombs, three tomb groups, one funerary monument, two remains of an aqueduct, 11 unidentified structures ('building substructures' and 'ruins'), one house, two quarries, and extensive remains of roads (cIMeC 2010b). Comparisons and contrasts can be made in this area that could not be applied in many other areas.

The choice was made to focus on sites occupied within the period from the first century BC to the fifth century AD. There are two reasons for the selection of these chronological parameters. First of all, this is an important period of rapid change in this area. Not only did political rule change hands several times, but within each of these periods there are signs of historical change (*e.g.*, from Burebista to Decebalus). The second reason is that politics have exerted a considerable amount of pressure on the archaeology of this time frame (see 1.3), since many modern Romanians see their national roots in the cultural interplay of Dacians and Romans. Some interpretations of the social and cultural history of this period demand reappraisal.

This period cuts through several traditional boundaries for Transylvania. Fig. 2.3 indicates chronological terms sometimes used in archaeological and historical literature of Transylvania, with a third column indicating widely-used conventional terms which are both misleading and confusing. The Roman period is best understood since the archaeology is supplemented by rich historical and epigraphic evidence. However, the pre-Roman and post-Roman chronologies do not agree on all things. The post-Roman period is the most poorly organised. The first century after the Roman withdrawal is at times called 'Late Roman', even though Transylvania was no longer under Roman administration and its most important cultural centres, the towns and forts, suffered depopulation at best, were abandoned at worst (Horedt 1982: 8). On the one hand there is some semblance of continuity in Transylvania; but on the other is the appearance of the very distinct Sântana de Mureş-Černjachov culture in intra-Carpathian Transylvania, associated with the Goths.

This situation is compounded by the fact that textual sources mention a number of populations in Transylvania. These mainly fall under the administration of the Goths, Huns and Gepids in turn. While Gothic and Gepid settlements are found in some

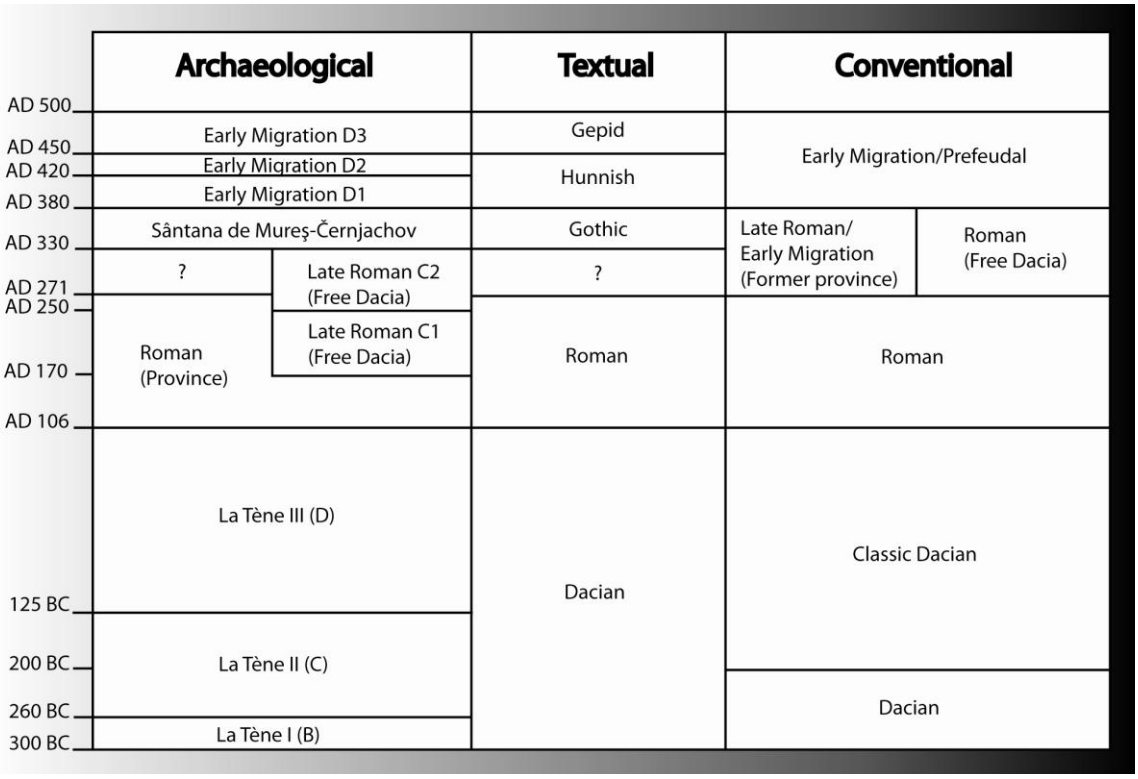


Figure 2.3: Chronological schemes of the Late Iron Age, Roman and post-Roman periods.

quantity throughout Transylvania, no Hunnish settlements are found in Transylvania, although some sporadic finds may indicate trade networks. The most useful chronological divisions were created by Radu Harhoiu (1990), separating the period between AD 380 and 500 into three distinct archaeological phases. However, a gap still exists in the chronology for the last quarter of the third century, in the period before the Goths begin to enter into intra-Carpathian Transylvania in any great number. Furthermore, there is significant geographical variation. Within the Roman Empire, dating rests on the historical horizon of AD 271, the year of Aurelian's withdrawal and with some exceptions this does not appear to be contradicted archaeologically in the main part of the province. However, Matei and Stanciu (2000: 9-10) have argued that in Free Dacia the material culture and settlement patterns do not change drastically until the end of the fourth century or the beginning of the fifth.

Ambiguity in usage is a further problem. In a number of publications 'La Tène' is used to describe a habitation phase of a settlement, a term which alone encompasses five hundred years. 'Migration period' deriving from the *Völkerwanderung* of German specialist literature is also problematic when applied to a general habitation phase since it also encompasses such a long period of time (AD 272 – *c*. 700).

This thesis utilises a simple tripartite division of Late La Tène (*c*. 100 BC – AD 106), Roman (AD 106 – *c*. 271), and post-Roman periods (*c*. AD 271 – *c*. 500), since all publications give some indication of this information. In some cases, more precise dating is possible for the post-Roman period, and in these cases appropriate mention is made. For sites in Free Dacia, only those which have secure evidence for fourth century use are considered as 'post-Roman', since a majority of the settlements where excavation has been conducted appear to be associated with the re-organisation of the area to the south as a Roman province. The Late Roman/Roman archaeological distinction in Free Dacia is difficult to note except through burials (Stanciu and Matei 2004). Another danger may be posed by the fact that Dacia does not seem to have been uniformly abandoned by the armies, and that most of Northern Dacia may have been abandoned before Aurelian (Găzdac 2002a). However, given the uncertainties of settlement chronology across Roman Dacia, the traditional historical date has been chosen since AD 271 is the last possible date that Roman armies could have been present in the study area.

2.2. Key theoretical concepts

It is widely agreed that the landscape is the best scale at which to investigate a broad range of issues concerned with social organisation and change (Knapp and Ashmore 1999). Broadly, the approach that has been chosen to study Northwest

Transylvania is landscape archaeology: a body of archaeological method and theory which focuses on evidence at a regional scale and is based on the belief that human behaviour shapes the natural, cultural and social environment (*cf.* Ashmore and Knapp 1999; Roberts 1989; Chapman and Dolukhanov 1997). The conceptual framework to interpret the archaeological evidence at this scale comprises two inter-related concepts: connectivity and community.

2.2.1. Connectivity

Prompted by the phenomenon of globalisation, a new model of the Mediterranean, and eventually Europe, began to emerge in the 1980s and 1990s, culminating in the *The Corrupting Sea: a Study of Mediterranean History* by Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell (2000). Refining the work of their predecessor Fernand Braudel (1966), Horden and Purcell created a model of the Mediterranean characterised by connectivity, mobility, and decentralisation. Traditional focal points like the state, city, and empire are rejected and replaced with modes of connection between them. The scale of ‘the Mediterranean’, however, is notoriously ill-defined, even in the introductory chapters of Horden and Purcell (2000: 9-25), a fact which has been both criticised and embraced (contrast Nixon 2002 with Laurence 2001).

As such, theories and methodologies associated with the connectivity model have appeared in regions which have few of the environmental characteristics of the Mediterranean area. For example, in Matthew Johnson’s (2007: 191) recent appraisal of landscape archaeology in England, he suggests re-inserting ‘mobility, conflict, and change’ back into the past, including the stories of immigration, emigration, and diaspora, since the ‘stable, contented, and sane England was only part of the story’. The application of this model beyond the Mediterranean has forced academics to face the

fact that it derives from a desire understand globalisation in our own time (Morris 2003: 32). Therefore, in the last decade, there has been a less bashful usage of the words 'globalisation', 'global', and 'globalising' in studies of the ancient world (Hingley 2005; Witcher 2000; Pitts 2008).

Running alongside the idea of connectivity, especially in the Roman period, is the rejection of the idea of homogeneity, mainly brought about by post-colonial discourse and supported by regional archaeological surveys (*e.g.*, Alcock 1993: 220-224; Alcock 1997; Mattingly 1997a; Mattingly 1997b; Mattingly 2006: 379-427; Terrenato 1998). As an empire of connected regions, the study of the mechanisms and levels of connection is extremely important. In this sense, we do not speak only of roads and rivers, but routes and points of contact between different communities.

Significant developments in connectivity took place in pre-Roman Dacia, the most significant of which were commercial routes (see 3.5) and routes to facilitate strategic coordination (see 4.1). Nevertheless, the scale and quality of connectivity was completely transformed with the Trajanic conquest. By this time, the Roman Empire had reached its greatest territorial size, and so the world was connected like never before. On the lowest level, the way local native communities were connected to broader social networks was completely transformed via lines and boundaries imposed by the Romans. On a regional level, the growth in scale and specialisation of rural production needed to fund the imperial occupation required an appropriate infrastructure of reliable and safe road and river networks. The appearance of regional diversity in Northwest Transylvania was sought after and found quite easily in the course of this research; but the mechanisms by which places were connected to the Roman Empire, the province of Dacia and their neighbours was often more elusive. For

this reason, it was necessary to integrate the spatial aspect of settlements and finds into a geospatial database.

2.2.2. Community

A number of landscape archaeologists have argued that the community is the most meaningful scale of analysis (Knapp 2003; Kuna 1991; Neustupný 1991); but defining the term within the discipline of archaeology has been notoriously difficult. An authoritative effort to establish a framework for studying archaeological communities argued for the pursuit of an interactional approach, rooted in social network theory, which is reliant on spatial proximity (Canuto and Yaeger 2000a: 2-3). As a matter of practicality as well as doctrine, archaeology has tended to focus on the spatial dimension of communities because it is detectable in the material record and it is easy to grasp empirically. Thus a structuralist-functionalist paradigm has served archaeology well (Dyson 1992; Johnson and Earle 1987; Kolb and Snead 1997; Neustupný 1998; Schwartz and Falconer 1994). However, as the idea of community has changed in the age of globalisation and the Internet, so has how it is explored (*cf*. Wanner 2009). While factors such as shared place and face-to-face interactions that were important in previous models of community are neither sufficient nor necessary, these factors and their effects are never unimportant. Space and locality continue to play an important role in current studies, but these are factors in community building, maintenance, and change rather than a foundation (Gerritsen 2003: 109-197; Blake 2001; Knapp 2003).

It is important to establish a definition and some parameters for the term as it is used and analysed in this thesis. In conceptualising community, the argument of religious studies professor Thomas Lewis is particularly useful:

> Once we allow that shared practices may bind people into community even when their most comprehensive visions of the good are expressed in incompatible terms, we begin to see practices, not just comprehensive narratives, as a possible source of community . . . [S]hared practices – insofar as they are understood by all parties in relation to a common proximate end, such as more just distribution of resources or a more representative government – may undergird a powerful form of community.
>
> (Lewis 2006: 69)

This understanding of community integrates the best elements of the current ideational community paradigms (Cohen 1985; Anderson 1983; 1991), but also provides a context for heterogeneity, dissent, conflict and changes within. Members of a community need not subscribe to the same set of values as long as they can engage in a dialogue with other members and agree on proximate goals. Thus, community is defined as a social system in which shared practices and interaction between members orient the group toward proximate ends. This definition provides both inclusive and exclusive parameters for members, but avoids the relativist ambiguity present in earlier models of imagined communities. To locate or define a community, three elements must be demonstrated archaeologically: symbolic boundaries, the means by which community members distinguish themselves from everyone else; shared practices, the ways in which members of the community create, reproduce and defines themselves; and proximate goals, important but flexible meanings which are attached to a community's existence. Thus, a community is, on one hand, a group identity, as many archaeological approaches currently define it (*e.g.* Mattingly 2006: 18; Haynes 1999: 165); but it is also more, and the methods by which it is maintained should be the focus of investigation rather than the means of expressing its apparent solidarity.

To study communities in this way, analyses at different scales were needed. Peter Wells (1999; 2001) has noted how archaeologically detectable changes in settlement boundaries, patterns of deposition and the manufacture of material culture mark shifts in the perception of community and the individual's relationship to it.

Working from a much larger body of data (and much more complete in some respects), Wells notes how the appearance of bounded settlements and large offerings made in open places, the change from individual burial to communal bone deposition, and the manufacture of mass-produced goods reflected a change from expression of individual identity to that of group identity within the context of Roman expansion. As these are widely recorded forms of evidence in Transylvania, the analyses follow a similar structure.

Where the information was available, general plans of buildings and settlement layouts were analysed with consideration for geographical context (see Chapter 4). That spatial form of individual settlements participates in the construction and perpetuity of social relationships has been demonstrated by Hillier and Hanson (1984). Architecture and layout is related to the ways in which social encounters, within the household and the settlement, are generated and controlled (Hillier and Hanson 1984: 1-25); and this is precisely the type of interaction on which a community is based. Tyler (2006: 25) makes the relationship between control and community explicit by stating that communities are strategic but loose systems of alliances, 'in order to control the conduct of others, or to avoid being controlled.'

On a much larger scale, the landscape was analysed for ritual and burial patterns (see Chapter 5) to locate specific localities and micro-regions defined by common practices. The distribution of certain types of manufactured goods is noted in these contexts since these often give impressions of the changing or continuous nature of perceptions of individual and community (Wells 1999: 141-147; 155-159). These communities were not in every case defined by a real locality, but sometimes by ideas like experience and memory (see 7.2 for discussion). Even in cases where strong regional patterns were discernable within a defined area, it is unlikely that these

communities were structured around the same intensity of interaction that local communities were. Many were products of the scale of connectivity introduced by the Romans.

Communities are not static; and so careful attention has also been paid to issues of evolution of settlement form, where the information is available, indicating changes in the nature of social interaction; and settlement continuity and discontinuity (or dislocation) in each period, which indicate the changing nature of territorial division and how communities and individuals within communities interact with each other.

2.3. Methodology

To explore these issues, a framework was established by which to collect, organise, and analyse large amounts of qualitative data within a spatial context. Archaeological data were collected from every published site in Cluj and Sălaj counties, including their coordinates to as precise a degree as possible using available sources. A series of databases was created using Microsoft Access for basic queries; and this data was used to create a Geographical Information System (GIS) for spatial analysis.

2.3.1. Data collection

In order to gather information about archaeological sites within the study area, a number of different sources were consulted. Two sources in particular were used to establish a foundation for the database, the cIMeC (2010a; 2010b) website and the county archaeological repertories (Cluj County, Crişan *et al.* 1992; Sălaj County, Matei 1979a; 1979b; 1979c; 1980). The Cluj repertory provided some detailed location information, but for a majority of sites entered in the database, the repertories were not adequate. Matei and Stanciu's (2000) catalogue of sites in Free Dacia and Gudea's (1985; 1997c) study of Roman fortifications along the Meseş *limes* provided more

detailed location information on rural and small military sites, respectively. In addition, reports in the Romanian journals *Acta Musei Napocensis* and *Acta Musei Porolissensis*, monographs and annual archaeological reports available on cIMeC were consulted to flesh out the database.

The inclusion of geospatial coordinates for these sites was an important component of the database since it was designed to facilitate the creation of a GIS. The projected coordinate system of UTM WGS84 was used (zones 34 and 35) rather than the national grid of Stereo 70 for compatibility with other data sets. The coordinates of sites were located by using existing maps in coordination mainly with the Proiectul Romania Digitala's Romanie Atlasului Digital (RO.A.D.), a vector map of Romania for use with Garmin's Mapsource, at a reference scale of 1:100,000. In addition, free satellite imagery from the Landsat programme and aerial photographs website were used to correct inaccuracies in topographical features. Data were also collected during the field seasons of the Porolissum Forum Project. Rudimentary .dwg files of the forum excavations made using a Leica Total Station were imported into the GIS. Staff associated with the project also conducted small-scale fieldwalking expeditions around the site recording the coordinates of important features (quarries, towers, fortlets, ramparts and roads) with a handheld GPS unit, which were also incorporated into the data set. The locations of salvage excavations in the area of Zalău were also recorded with a GPS.

2.3.2. The creation of the database

Microsoft Access was utilised to record the data on the sites since it uses Structure Query Language (SQL) which facilitates queries of the data and because it is easily integrated into ArcGIS. Every site was assigned a number to identify it and link it

for cross-queries. Because of the variability by which archaeological evidence has been found and recorded (noted in the database), the greatest challenge was to establish a set of principles for site comparison. Not only did differences exist in the type of investigation, but also the scale. Three types of excavation were noted: research excavations, which derive from a research plan and are always long-term; sondages, small trenches which have in Romania been a common means of confirming or refuting the existence of a settlement or other built feature; and salvage excavations, which are meant to recover as much information as possible within a short time about archaeology which will be affected by development.

The first step was to establish a general site type, meaning its most general characteristic (Table 2.1). The site types which were used present few surprises, save for the distinction between a settlement and a settlement area. This distinction has to do with the quality of the recorded data and not with anything inherent to the site. In order to say anything meaningful about a settlement, certain details are required: size, site features, evidence of industry or architectural details. Although repertories have recorded a number of these as settlements, frequently none of these important details are published. Despite the uncertain nature of these settlement areas, they are used for very general interpretations of the landscape because in some parts of the study area (*e.g.* the Șimleu area in Free Dacia; see 6.2 for discussion) they outnumber other archaeological features.

Table 2.1: Classification system for site types in relation to the method of investigation.

Description	Nature of evidence		
	Visible remains/ earthworks/aerial photos	**Surface/chance finds**	**Excavation**
Burial site	-	Sarcophagus/sarcophagi or burial urn(s)	Feature/features containing human remains or with some certainty having contained human remains (empty sarcophagi)
Fortification	Visible linear earthworks	-	Archaeological remains of substantial linear ditches, stone, earth, or wooden walls and/or palisades
Hoard	-	Large concentration of coins and/or personal ornamentation which are clearly associated	Large concentration of coins and/or personal ornamentation from the same feature
Isolated find	-	Single chance find	-
Settlement	Visible foundations of structures	Artefact scatter with recorded evidence of building materials, extent, and/or artefacts of industrial nature	Archaeological remains of structures, features associated with structures, or definite stratigraphic layers of appropriate periods
Settlement area	-	Artefact scatter for which there is ambiguous recording	Artefacts which appear in stratigraphic layers of later chronological periods; occasionally re-used
Tower	Visible circular or rectangular mound at a high altitude	-	Circular or rectangular small structure at a high altitude
Urban find	-	Isolated find within the extent of an ancient town	Isolated find within the extent of an ancient town, (usually recovered during rescue excavations)
Urban structure	-	-	Archaeological remains of structures which fall within a the extent of an ancient town
Construction	Remains of a road, pylons or water conduit	Remains of a road, pylons or water conduit	Excavated remains of a road, pylons or water conduit

Settlements for which meaningful information was available were sub-divided into several interpretative categories (Table 2.2). As data collection progressed some slight modifications were made, but for the most part they remained unchanged.

Table 2.2: Settlement interpretative categories.

Description	Types of evidence in settlement		
	Visible remains/ earthworks/aerial photos	**Surface finds**	**Excavations**
Fortlet	Rectangular fortification of wood, earth and/or stone between 200 m^2 and 1 ha	-	Rectangular fortification of wood, earth and/or stone between 200 m^2 and 1 ha
Hillfort	Visible earthworks surrounding a hill	-	Settlement on a promontory fortified with ditches and/or palisades
Homestead	Visible foundations of a single structure	Artefact scatters with building materials OR in close proximity to isolated burials or burial groups; where extent is recorded, under 1 ha	Archaeological remains of a single structure or small group of structures
Military base	Visible earthworks enclosing a large area	-	Structures or groups of structures with evidence for ditches, stone, earth, or wooden walls and/or palisades
Marching camp	-	-	Excavated fortified settlement constructed of timber and earth and of a temporary nature
Village	-	Artefact scatters with building materials where the extent is over 1 ha	Archaeological remains of a number of structures in close proximity, usually with multiple phases, with no evidence of enclosure
Villa	-	Artefact scatters outside of the area of towns and forts which include roof tiles and either evidence for heating systems or carved stonework	Archaeological remains of a central monumental complex outside of urban areas

Certain other characteristics were recorded for these settlements as it was available which facilitated the analysis of settlement at a regional scale: extent to look at patterns of nucleation and dispersal; architectural elaboration to look at perceived settlement status in the Roman period; the presence or absence of evidence for craft/agricultural/ industrial activities to characterise regional production; and presence or absence of evidence for religious ritual to characterise distinctive rites associated with broader communities. Of these, extent was the most problematic (obtained for 45.8 per cent of settlements). Although it is a characteristic which is easily obtained for

excavated hillforts and Roman military structures, it is rarely recorded for surface scatters and is usually unknown in salvage excavations. For a number of excavations, reasonable estimates had to be made. For example, if only a single small feature was recorded in an area where other investigation has been carried out, it seemed prudent to estimate this site to be less than one hectare in extent.

Interpretative categories were also applied to other site types, listed below. The terminology preserves some conventions in Romanian archaeology because in certain contexts they are hint at meaningful differences (*e.g.*, the distinction between treasure and coin hoards in Romanian archaeology):

- Burial site
  - Isolated burial: single burial
  - Burial group: concentration of five or less burials
  - Cemetery: concentration of more than five burials
  - Possible cemetery: location where a high concentration of funerary monuments has been located, but no excavation has taken place
- Construction
  - Aqueduct
  - Bridge
  - Road
- Fortification
  - Ditch and earth wall
  - Stone wall
- Hoards
  - Treasure hoard: hoard containing personal ornamentation and/or coins
  - Coin hoard: hoard containing only coins
- Isolated find and urban finds: categorised by find

Finally, a threefold rating system was established to evaluate confidence in site location (Table 2.3). A number of sites and finds fall within the first category because the county archaeological repertories publish sites in relation to associated villages and towns and in many cases it has been difficult to find the precise location of sondages carried out in the early part of the century. In the second category fall some sites and finds because of methodological limitations (see 1.4). Sites in the third category consist mainly of excavated sites, although the repertories have helped immensely in locating

artefact scatters. Although material from all three categories is discussed throughout the thesis, most distribution maps tend to reflect sites in the first and second categories and spatial analyses were only undertaken on the first category.

Table 2.3: Rating system for site location in the database

Rating	Characteristics	Percentage of sites
1	Only associated village is indicated for site location	29.6
2	Confidence in the location within one kilometre	23.2
3	Absolute confidence in location	47.2

2.3.3. The Geographical Information System

The use of GIS in archaeology has rapidly increased since the 1990s because it facilitates the spatial analysis of archaeology at multiple scales and it has become widely available to non-specialists (*cf.* Wheatley and Gillings 2002; Conolly and Lake 2006). Because of its strengths in spatial analysis, and because geospatial data for Transylvania has become more readily available in recent years, a GIS was deemed particularly important to interpret the ancient landscape. The data from the database was imported as a .dbf file into ESRI's ArcGIS.

In order to analyse the relationship between ancient settlement and environmental factors such as altitude, hydrology, slope, soil and land-use, a number of layers were created in the software. Finished topographic data from the Shuttle Radar Topographic Mission (SRTM) from the United States Geological Survey (USGS) was used to create a rudimentary Digital Elevation Model (DEM). The raster data consists of cells of a three arc second resolution (90 meters); and was thus inadequate for more detailed analyses such as viewshed. This data set, however, sacrifices resolution for accuracy: in comparing this data to topographic maps made by the Russian Military Topographic Directorate (1986) and American Army Map Service (1960), the error was

found to be negligible. For the analyses that are important to the current research, these medium resolution data were deemed adequate. Though the DEM reflects the modern topography and is therefore not a completely accurate reflection of the situation in antiquity, the skeleton of Northwest Transylvania, consisting of the mountains and deep river valleys, has not changed drastically. At the resolution of the DEM the smaller alterations to the landscape were not detected anyway.

Like elevation, most aspects of the modern landscape are products of human activity over time, and some modifications were made in order to better interpret the ancient situation. First of all, the river courses have changed considerably due to irrigation channels cut throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Not even the pre-war Austrian cadastral map (see *infra*) was useful because many of the irrigation channels had already been made by this time. To resolve this problem, a raster of water courses was created using the DEM by means of a method previously employed (see Gillings 1995 for detailed description). This was transformed into a vector file and merged with modern river vector data based on RO.A.D. and LandSat imagery to catch any errors. This created a more accurate depiction of the ancient landscape.

Another problem concerns soil formation processes. The main factor in Transylvania's soil transformation is deforestation. This has created some very serious problems, and in the southeast some areas face the threat of desertification. Without proper afforestation practices, especially along the steeper slopes, much of the land that has been deforested on a substantial scale throughout the last two thousand years may show little sign that it was ever under forest cover. As early as the 1930s, the lower hill country of Transylvania was practically cleared of forest (Fleure and Pellham 1936: 50).

Since there have been no significant palaeobotanical studies in the study region, only conjectures can be made about the extent of forest cover using modern

information. In the area of Cluj and Sălaj, the earliest accessible accurate maps were made by the Third Military Mapping Survey of the Austrian Empire (1915). The series of maps concerning the study region indicated forest cover and large estates around the villages. A map was created for the micro-regions indicating these land-use categories. The forest cover data was then merged with modern forest data to create a reasonable minimum extent of forest cover which over thousands of years has not been over-exploited. Finally, the new map of forest cover was cut to include only areas with the soil types of podzols, regosols and cambisols which characterise the floors of the forests over most of Romania. This eliminated the younger areas of forest. With this method, the ancient landscape was divided into two categories: open areas, suitable for cultivation and pasture, and areas likely to have been under forest. The reasoning behind this is that under most of the forest cover exist categories of soil which would be ill-suited for sustainable cultivation for any period of time. The leached brown podzols yield poor crops unless heavily manured; but manuring is hardly used in Romania (Mitrany 1968: 323-324). The cambisols and regosols easily erode in the dry springs and early summers. Therefore, these areas are more likely to represent forests which have remained in place over the *longue dureé*.

Specific vector layers were created to facilitate the study of settlement patterns and subsistence strategies in relation to environmental conditions, specifically 'agricultural potential' and 'agricultural territory'. These were created as very general guidelines for interpretation due to the dearth of knowledge about farming practices in ancient Dacia. A layer defining 'agricultural potential' on a scale from one to five (one being the most suitable for cultivation, five being the least suitable) was created based on the convergence of environmental factors which could affect productivity (slope, altitude, soil type, flood risk and wetland). Slope and altitude were evaluated using

modern measures (Nordic Centre for Spatial Development 2004). Values were added and then reclassified into five classes according to equal intervals. This was used to measure the amount of faith a community could place in its locality to feed the population (Table 2.4). Higher values meant that larger settlement needed to rely on more distant supply networks.

Table 2.4: Factors affecting 'agricultural potential'.

Factor	1 (Most suitable)	2 (Average)	3 (Least suitable)
Altitude	Below 600m	-	600m and above
Flood risk	Minimal	Moderate	High
Slope	Below 10% grade	10%-20% grade	Above 20% grade
Soil type	Chernozems, alluvium	Brown earth, brown cambisols	Rendzinas, clays, brown podzols, cambisols
Wetlands	Absence	-	Presence

‘Agricultural territories’ were created for larger settlements based on the maximum amount of space which could be traversed in one hour going away from the settlement. The importance of time has been noted in a number of archaeological applications of GIS, providing a much more accurate idea of territorial catchment than spatial buffers or Thiessen polygons (*cf.* Gaffney and Stančić 1992**,** Verhagen *et al.* 1995). Bintliff (1977: 112) argued, based on Chisolm’s (1962) suggestion that the maximum extent for sedentary agricultural communities falls within a one hour walk radius from the settlement. Carlstein (1982) has argued, based on a number of ethnographic studies of pre-industrial societies, that land-use intensification decreases as travel time (or ‘human time cost’) increases. This analysis operates on the general expectation that this was true for larger settlements in the ancient world, including hillforts, towns, military bases and villages. Therefore, the one hour radius is seen to cover a range of activities, decreasing in intensification toward the limits of the territory, where land-use at any scale by the settlement inhabitants drops off most significantly. Sites falling within the same agricultural territory are considered to be

associated with the same community since important multi-lateral interactions would occur on a daily basis out of the necessity to feed, house, guard, and control a large population.

In order to determine a one hour radius, a friction surface for time was created using the 'backpacker's equation' which estimates speed based on slope (see Gorenflo and Gale 1990 for equation and detailed methodology). This was applied over the entire surface of the study area, and cost distances were generated radiating out from the larger settlements to represent the distance of a one hour walk from the settlement. The use of agricultural potential in conjunction with agricultural territory offered some general ideas about the degree that a settlement could depend on its hinterland.

2.4. Conclusion

The method employed to investigate the ancient landscape of Northwest Transylvania was chosen with a specific set of issues in mind. Settlement architecture and layout were analysed to study local communities; burials and ritual activity were studied to look at broader communities; and settlement patterns in the landscape were analysed to investigate how these communities were connected. A number of problems were encountered integrating archaeological data into a usable geospatial database, mainly due to different methods of investigation and the quality of recording. This was resolved by creating a systematic means of classifying sites and finds, distinguishing those sites with meaningful details recorded from those without and creating a ranking system for confidence in location to assess interpretations. The results of these analyses are the focus of the Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Chapter 3: The Environment of Northwest Transylvania

This chapter outlines the basic physical and human geographical context of the research area. This is important not because it defines human behaviour, but because geographical features create a sense of place for communities living in it. In Northwest Transylvania there is extraordinary topographical variation in terms of altitude, soil, slope and hydrology. Ways humans have interacted with these geographical features, based on archaeological and anthropological information, are discussed below. In the final section of the chapter, three of the most important ancient communication networks are discussed which contextualise the development of the region. These networks of connectivity embody the important relationship between landscape and community.

3.1. Environmental Character of Northwest Transylvania

Northwest Transylvania consists of two distinct geological features: the Transylvanian Basin and the Apuseni Mountains (Fig. 3.1). The interplay between the basin and the mountain blocks created the modern geological situation of Northwest Transylvania. After the Late Pliocene Epoch/Early Quaternary Period created the modern Carpathian Mountains in Transylvania, they were gradually abraded by erosion (Sanders *et al.* 2002: 129-130). The Apuseni Mountains blocked these sediments from flowing into the Pannonian Basin, and the Transylvanian Basin was uplifted. This is why the basin is characterised by high altitude: 400 meters mean elevation compared to

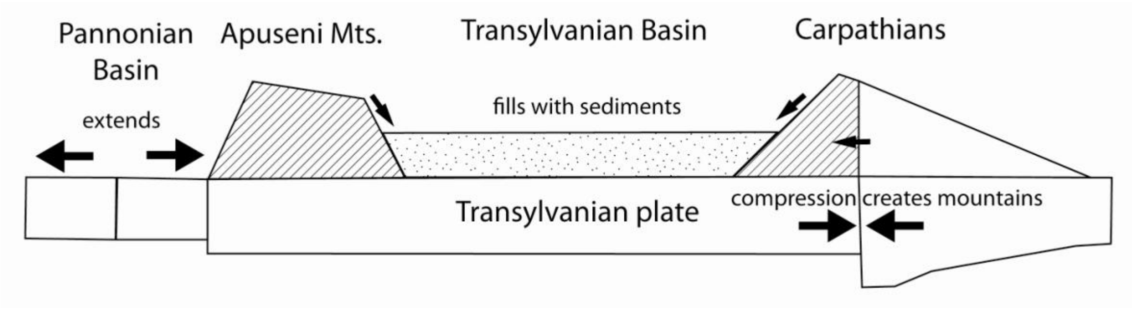


Figure 3.1: Conceptual model for geological formation of Transylvania in the Late Pliocene/Early Quaternary. After Sanders *et al.* 2002: Fig. 7.

near sea level for the Pannonian basin. In the Quaternary, rising movements began transforming the adjacent plains in the Transylvanian Basin into the internal sub-Carpathian hills. Tectonic movements in the Pleistocene exaggerated existing topography as gorges were deepened, mountain walls rose, and tributary streams cut through stone (Gherasimov 1960: 197; Morariu *et al.* 1966: 27). These exaggerated features distinguish the Transylvanian Basin from its neighbouring lowlands. These mountains and their gorges, and the hills and their adjacent valleys create a situation where a dispersed pattern of settlement is favourable (though not essential).

In the authoritative *The Geography of Romania* Tiberiu Morariu and his colleagues stated that 'the Romanian Carpathians have polarized an intensive human activity inside their area, where the national custom of the most authentic character, and the purest Romanian idiom have been preserved, and where the great treasures of Romanian folklore are to be found' (Morariu *et al.* 1966: 27). Other works on geography and geology also communicate the idea of the mountains naturally shielding Romanians from invaders, an idea which plays an important part in the Romanian narrative (*e.g.*, De Martonne 1917: 436; Turncock 1974: 1).

It is feasible that the mountains played an insulating role in some periods of cultural development. However, in Northwest Transylvania there are several river valleys with easy crossing points in the large gap between the Apuseni Mountains and

the Eastern Carpathians. The Dacians and the Romans constructed a complex and extensive system of fortifications to supervise and control traffic through the gaps of the mountain barrier, but not to prevent it. If anything, instead of insulating the cultural development of this region, it stimulated social networks and connectivity by funnelling a larger amount of traffic through here than neighbouring areas.

3.1.1. Mountains

The Apuseni Mountains are flanked by rivers, the Mureş to the south and the Crişul Repede and Someş to the north. A distinctive feature of the northern Apuseni Mountains, which form an important part of Northwest Transylvania, is the intrusive schist and gneiss found in the Gilău Mountains. These mountains are different in character than the true Carpathians in that they are more broken up as a result of water erosion and cave-ins. The tops of the mountains often form isolated massifs, whose relief may be even or undulating. Between these massifs are rugged gorges which widen in certain areas to form small depressed basins. The mountains can be subdivided into several smaller mountain groups. The sub-groups present in the northern sector within the study area are the Seş (or Plopiş), Vlădeasa, Meseş, Mare and Gilău Ranges (Fig. 3.2). Only a few peaks in the Apuseni Mountains rise above 1,800 metres, the remainder being relatively low compared to other mountain groups. The Prisnel Range begins on the other side of the Meseş Gate, which eventually runs into the Carpathian arc.

Mountains are characterised as geological formations which contain characteristics of altitude, ruggedness, peripherality and danger (Funnell and Parish 2001: 1). There is no universal definition for mountains, and thus states and organisations have ascribed local definitions in order to guide policy. Fulfilling its

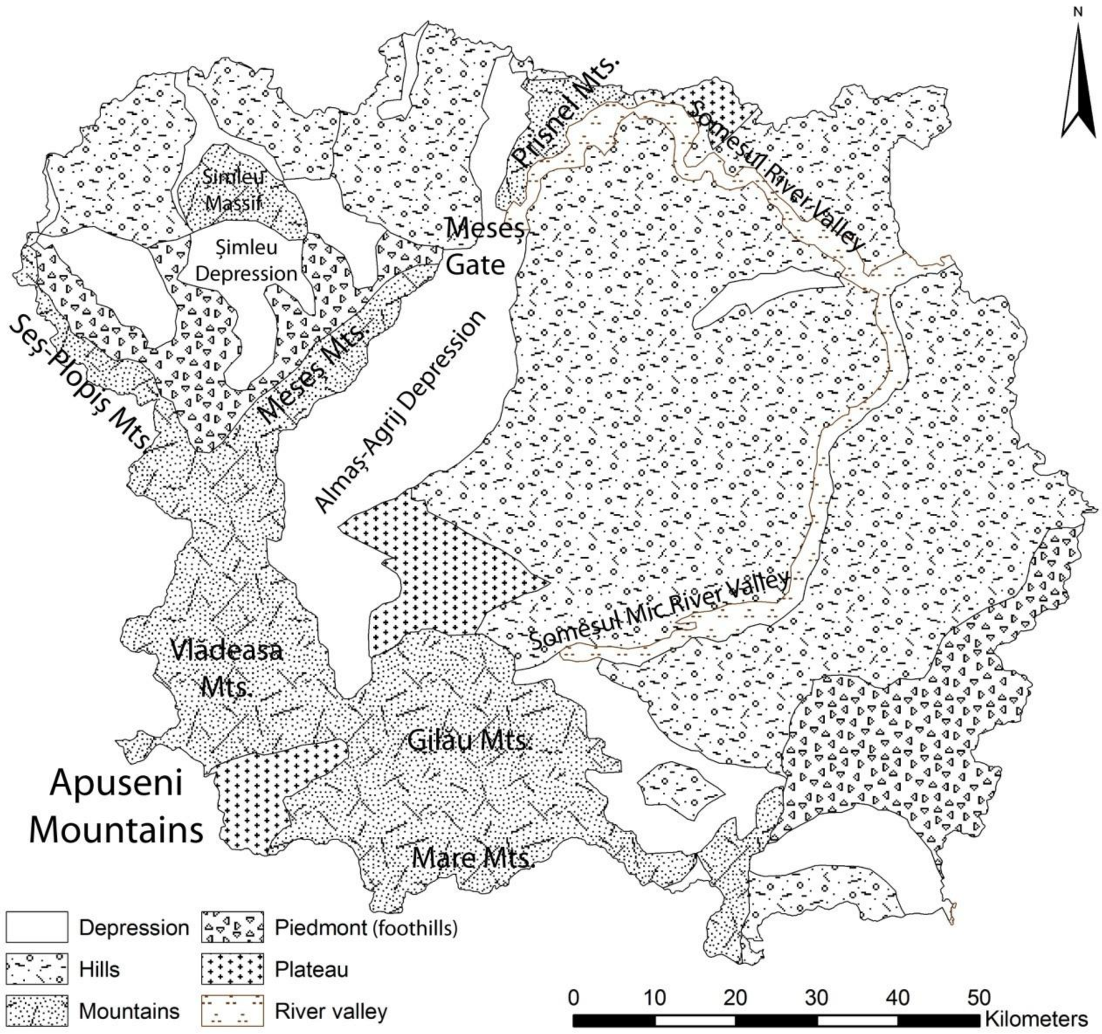


Figure 3.2: Geographical features of Northwest Transylvania.

responsibility for the management of mountain areas, the European Union has determined which areas should receive agricultural subsidies based on low productivity, a criterion which is beneficial in the analyses conducted for the ancient world (Danz and Henz 1979). This is in part determined by low settlement density and poor infrastructure, but mostly has to do with the length of the growing seasons. Romania defines mountain areas as areas with a minimum altitude of 600 meters and also those which have a slope of a grade over 20 per cent (Nordic Centre for Spatial Development 2004: 154), and this altitude serves as the threshold for ‘upland’ settlement for Northwest Transylvania in this research. The application of this modern classification to

the ancient landscape is risky, but given how few large ancient settlements are located above this threshold it does appear to serve as a useful distinction.

Partially because many of the valleys are inhospitable, prone to landslides and serious floods, and partially because of the even piedmonts of the mountain range, settlement clusters and cultivated lands in the Apuseni Mountains are found at heights over 1,000 meters. It has been suggested repeatedly that the people of these highland settlements, known as *Moţi*, constitute the descendants of Dacians, who fled to the mountains to escape Roman control (Martonne 1922: 63-64; Morariu *et al.* 1966: 27). However, Richardson and Burford (1995: 184) argue that peasants retreated into the mountains to escape conscription by the Habsburgs. Another explanation is that Hungarian landowners facilitated isolated settlements by Romanian woodcutters on the slopes of the hills, locations suitable for mixed economy (Savu 1984; Pop 1985). As timber resources were exhausted, settlement gradually moved upslope. Another argument is that this situation was a result of state interference in the 18th and 19th centuries, when the Habsburg state's control over minerals and woodlands constrained economic diversification and encouraged settlement dispersal to maximise agricultural potential (Abrudan and Turncock 1999: 321-322; Surd and Turncock 2000: 286-288). Whatever the truth, the modern settlement pattern in the uplands cannot be used to construct arguments about ancient settlement.

3.1.2. Hills

Within Romania, hills cover 37 per cent of the entire territory, a larger area than mountains or plains (Morariu *et al.* 1966: 28). Morariu (*et al.* 1966) distinguishes between the tableland hills, which characterise the study area, and the sub-Carpathian piedmont to the east and south. The tableland hills in the Transylvanian Basin are

characterised by simple folding, heavy gravel and alluvial deposits from mountain rivers, and large surfaces of even ground. At many places there are important salt massifs, such as at Turda. Again, it is important to define exactly what is meant by the term hill in the context of the study area. These can be defined as impressive landforms that are higher in altitude than their surrounding area, but under 600 meters.

These features have played an important role in the social construction of the landscape throughout history. Settlement on and around hills is much less dispersed than in the mountains, and much better connected. However, hills themselves can function as boundaries in the modern landscape. The system of hills in Sălaj County expanding north and west from Zalău in general have low altitudes (150-400 m), but nevertheless serve to fragment and decentralise the region socially and politically (Liviu and Dombay 2001). Furthermore, in her study of the village of Ieud in Maramureş County, Gail Kligman (1988: 29) notes that the people of the village give names to all the hills which demarcate the village and the activities within: 'If they didn't have names, how would you know how to go?'

What exactly is it about hills that encourages, and also reflects, social fragmentation? We turn to Horden and Purcell (2000: 124-132) for an explanation:

> Fields of perception and their foci are characteristic ingredients in the definition of Mediterranean microregions because these microregions can never be sufficiently understood solely in their local contexts. The chains of perceptibility created by looking from one vantage point to the next serve both to express the relationship of individual localities to one another and . . . to make sense of the wider world.
>
> (Horden and Purcell 2000: 125)

Like mountains, hills block vision from one area of the basin to the other, creating rifts in the perceptual continuum. Unlike mountains, however, hills are found throughout middle elevations and lowlands where denser settlement patterns exist in the modern period. For ancient inhabitants without modern forms of transportation, this could have

been an even more significant factor in the formation of the social landscape. The idea of the hills as boundaries serves as a complement to their perceived role in the late Iron Age and Roman period as political and social centres (hillforts and military bases), with influences over a large area. Therefore, while we cannot rule out unequal proportions of archaeological investigation, it is unsurprising to find dispersed settlement patterns in the hilly regions of Northwest Transylvania which are otherwise very suitable for settlement and cultivation.

3.1.3. Hydrology

The sources of the rivers in Northwest Transylvania are the copious springs in the Apuseni (especially in the Bihor) and the Carpathian Mountains. These rivers are part of a larger system associated with the Tisza River, itself a tributary to the Danube (Fig. 3.3). In this region, the 'Western group' of Tisza tributaries is characterised by a larger water supply from the accumulation of snow during winter, a relatively constant flow from the mountains, and higher values of the average density of the hydrographic network (Morariu *et al.* 1966: 48).

There are very few lakes in Northwest Transylvania. Most of the ones present in the modern period are the result of flood-control efforts or industrial activity (consequently many of these have not been imported into the GIS). At Cojocna, one such lake is the result of salt exploitation which may date back to antiquity.

Romania has several thousand mineral springs. Within the study area the most important ones are the chloro-sodic springs of Turda and Cojocna and the salty springs of Someşeni. The ancient settlements of Aquae, Germisara and Băile Herculane in the Mureş Valley area seem to have expanded from the local cult associated with thermal springs (Oltean 2007: 189). Within the study area, none of these mineral springs have

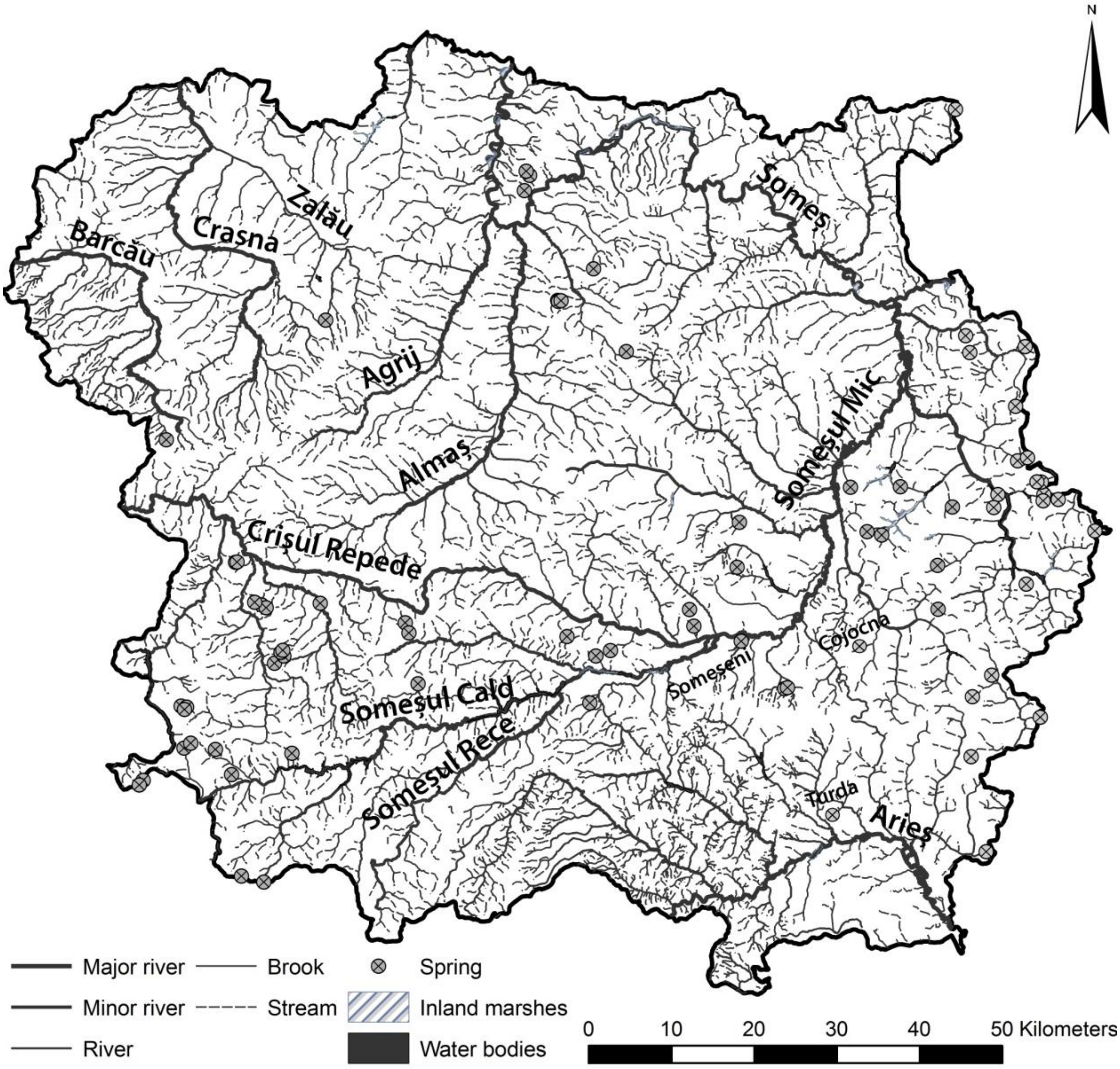


Figure 3.3: Water, water bodies and springs in Northwest Transylvania. Water streams characterised by rank – Major river = highest, stream = lowest, meaning the most likely to have changed since antiquity.

any particularly striking features in regards to temperature or appearance. None are hot, and none of them are coloured strangely or foamy, qualities which may have given them special importance in the ancient world (Horden and Purcell 2000: 412-413). Nevertheless, the salty quality of some the springs which are located over anticlines with salt cores may have been invested with special qualities.

3.1.4. River valleys

In the Transylvanian Basin, the rich alluvial soils of the river valleys are conducive to cultivation, but they have also been important for transportation of bulk resources in the area, mainly stone and salt. Two of the major urban centres of modern Romania, Cluj-Napoca and Turda, are located in the valleys of the Someş and the Arieş, respectively; but these were also important Roman centres. For the most part, main river valleys in the Transylvanian Basin are attractive places to settle: there are only a few small pockets of wetlands along the Someşul Mic, and flood risk is minimal. The situation in Northwest Transylvania does not appear to have changed significantly since ancient times. A study of the soils of the Someşul Mic and Someş river valleys shows only the smallest areas of alluvial protosoils (indicating the most active part of the floodplain) along the courses within the study area, as opposed to the areas of the Someş outside the study area, such as course of the river north of Jibou (Jakab 1995).

Within the mountain areas, however, river valleys are generally inhospitable because they are too narrow and prone to landslides and serious floods (Fig. 3.4). Near the Apuseni Mountains heavy precipitation is intensified by numerous Miocene/Pliocene formations (as well as artificial drainage channels) producing very rapid transfers of water along short, steeply-graded courses. The water discharges powerfully in the main and tributary streams simultaneously, causing devastation in the drainage basin (Turncock 1974: 67-68).

A key problem is to what extent flooding influenced ancient settlement patterns in the river valleys. Attempting to explain why fewer Late Iron Age sites have been located at lower altitudes, Gheorghiu (2001: 88-90) argues that flooding prevented permanent settlement in the Mureş River Valley. Oltean (2007: 92-96), disputing this point, has noted the similarities between this argument and older interpretations of



Figure 3.4: Road leading down to a gorge in the mountain south of Ceahlau. Fleure and Pellham 1936: Plate I.

British Iron Age settlement patterns. This is an interpretation that is not limited to these geographical regions or the Iron Age in general. Settlement in the European plains is frequently linked to increasing political and economic complexity whether it is brought about by Roman conquest or the rise of capitalism. There is powerful resonance in Braudel's (1966: 85) assertion that 'any plain that is claimed for agriculture . . . is obliged to live and produce for the outside world, not for its own sake'. It is true that there is a marked increase of settlements in the river valleys from the Late Iron Age to the Roman period, when Dacia was connected to the Mediterranean trade network, but to what extent this is an artefact of archaeological methodology is a matter for discussion (see 6.5).

3.1.5. Forests

Palynological data suggests that pine forests have existed inside the Carpathian arc since the last glacial period (*cf.* E. Pop 1929; 1960; Tantau *et al.* 2005). Some species that may have featured more prominently into ancient forests are the yew, beeches, and other types of pines which have been extensively felled because of their popularity in the modern period (Giurescu 1980: 15). Forests in pre-modern Romania have usually been linked to agriculture or household economy, and only in modern times was there a commercial woodland economy linked to estates. Dense forests on hillslopes also have the important role of protecting lowlands from the hazards of erosion, landslides and flooding. Many villages have found a balance with the exploitation of forests on hill slopes (Fig. 3.5); but over-exploitation of forests in the modern period has caused huge gullies and alluvial fans (Fleure and Pellham 1936: 27)

A review of faunal data at Sarmizegetusa Regia indicates that forest-dwelling deer, boar, bear, wolf, and beaver were all hunted by Dacians (Nandris 1981: 249). Furthermore, the prominent use of wooden beams for construction materials in fortifications as well as rural houses indicates some measure of systematic exploitation. Fuel would have also been required for metallurgy, which is well-attested at hillforts. Funerary evidence also indicates that cremation was practiced by the Dacians, indicating one spiritual aspect of forest clearance.

The Romans exploited the forests for similar reasons, but the scale of this exploitation clearly grew. As the extraction of metal ores in Dacia increased, the need for fuel for their processing should have grown on an exponential scale. Woodland needed to be cleared for the space to construct extensive fortifications, and the by-product was used as construction material. This appears to be the case for the line of towers along the Meseş *limes*. In addition, to feed the demand of military communities



Figure 3.5: A modern village system – houses cluster around the road; arable land on the valley floor is devoted to maize; lower portions of hill sides are cleared for hay meadows; continuous stretches of forest on upper slopes are preserved. From Fleure and Pellham 1936: Plate IX.

and towns, extensive areas around these settlements would have needed to be cleared to facilitate pasturing if they were not already.

Forest exploitation and manipulation was an important component of the ancient economy, but for the Dacians it has reached mystical proportions in modern interpretations (Giurescu 1980: 14). Although we cannot push this interpretation too far, forests probably did play an important role in the spiritual life of Transylvania. They feature prominently in numerous folk-stories, songs, and poems. Eliade (1972: 1-20) has argued extensively for the central role of the wolf in Dacian religion, a creature associated with the forests. The mandrake associated with sorcery and folk-medicine in Transylvania is found in the mountain forests, and the rituals associated with their gathering are as important as the plants themselves (Eliade 1972: 204-225). On the other hand, Roman sources depict the forest as a dangerous landscape. Cornelius Fuscus is said to have lost the battle and his life in the thick of a forest in AD 87 (Cass. Dio lxvii. 6), and Trajan's Column depicts the difficulties campaigning in wooded areas

(Plates XVII, XXXII). Outside of Dacia, Teutoburg Forest was associated with disaster. Whether or not forest clearance on a large scale had commenced in the Late Iron Age, as it had in Britain (*cf.* Hanson 1996), is unknown, but the Romans perceived the land as marginal and savage. What served a perfectly functional purpose for provincial life was also related to the elimination of a landscape of perceived marginality or threat. The job of the Roman army in the initial years of the conquest was to make the landscape, including the forests of the Meseş Mountains and other areas, secure and productive. The clearance of some forests (see 6.4) was the destruction of one more element of the landscape which was a source of agency, memory and identity to the Dacians.

3.2. Climate

Modern weather statistics cannot be used to reconstruct the climate of ancient Northwest Transylvania. However, because the Apuseni Mountains and the Transylvanian Basin have been constants since antiquity, it is likely that conditions most strongly influenced by the geological topography of the area were quite similar.

During most of the year, the Transylvanian Basin receives marginally more rain than other zones, and the mountains generally have higher precipitation than lower zones. As the altitude rises, the average summer temperature drops. The higher temperatures and longer summers in western Transylvania's lowlands make the land more suitable for cultivation (*cf.* Fig. 2.1). In the winter, the Eastern Carpathians form a barrier against the icy winds of the Eurasian continental air masses, and so the temperature and conditions within the Carpathians are also less extreme than to the east. The amount of snow-cover is correlated with increasing altitudes (Morariu *et al.* 1966: 39-40). The lowest average temperatures in modern Romania correspond to the mountain heights and intra-Carpathian depressions where masses of cold air accumulate

in the winter. Thus, the mountains serve as barriers against the stronger winds from all directions, creating a very moderate climate for most of the Transylvanian Basin, a situation which probably did not change much since antiquity.

A study of the Carpathian peat lands indicated a prominent rise in the water table around AD 1400 (Schnitchen *et al.* 2006: 15). This phenomenon is also attested in Western Europe, where contemporary changes in lake levels and peat land hydrology are explained by the intensification of westerly airflow and associated increased precipitation (Van Geel *et al.* 1996; Speranza *et al.* 2003). This would imply that winds and precipitation may have been *less* intense and severe than modern Transylvania. This contradicts the image based on ancient written sources, which attribute the climate of antique Dacia with a wetter and colder character (Gheorghiu 2001: 6; Glodariu *et al.* 1996: 10). Authors claiming more intense conditions in antiquity cite the occasional frozen condition of the Danube (Pliny *Pan*. 12.1; Flor. ii. 28. 18). Even if this phenomenon was more frequent in antiquity, it may not have been in the more protected area of the Transylvanian Basin; and anyway, Oltean (2007: 31-33) has rightly argued that the modern pollution of the Danube may have lowered its freezing temperature, making total freezes rarer. More specific issues cannot be answered until more detailed environmental studies are undertaken.

3.3. Communication networks

Communication networks were a primary means of creating and maintaining community in the pre-modern world. In Transylvania, constructed networks are often disrupted. Severe and persistent rains tend to wash away the surface of roads heading through the Apuseni Mountains in the modern period (Bleahu and Bordea 1982; Abrudan and Turncock 1999). Historically individual farms were often connected to the

lowlands via footpaths and tracks which are not always navigable in the winter (Abrudan and Turncock 1998: 322). Thus we must consider that all of these networks may not have been safe or available at all times.

Three pre-modern network systems are understood well enough for discussion: the commercial route known as the Salt Road, the river system and the constructed network of Roman roads. These all played an important role in connecting places which were perceived as important, and thus in the symbolic construction of the landscape.

3.3.1. The Salt Road

Between the salt mines of Transylvania and the western part of the Balkan Peninsula, a number of hoards containing silver coins and jewellery appear in the pre-Roman Iron Age. These are usually understood in the context of a commercial road known as the Salt Road (*drumul sării*), utilised in various forms from prehistory up until the 18th century AD (Chirilă and Matei 1983: 116; 1986: 108). Along this route, salt from the areas of Dej, Napoca and Potaissa was moved to the west and southwest toward Pannonia and the Balkan Peninsula which are lacking in the resource (Fig. 3.6). In the pre-Roman period, silver seems to represent some of the only traces of this trade. It is generally agreed that the silver for Dacian jewellery was obtained by melting down Greek coins until *c*. 80 BC, and subsequently by melting down Roman Republican *denarii* (Chirilă and Matei 1986: 108-110). The fact that the amount of silver in the jewellery of some hoards equals the same amount as an average coin hoard in this region is meant to demonstrate this (Chirilă and Matei 1986: 109).

The salt mines at Potaissa (modern Turda), Dej, Sic, Cojocna and Ocna Sibiului were the most important in medieval Transylvania, and evidence of their exploitation dates back to the ancient period. The first written record of trade actually dates to 892,

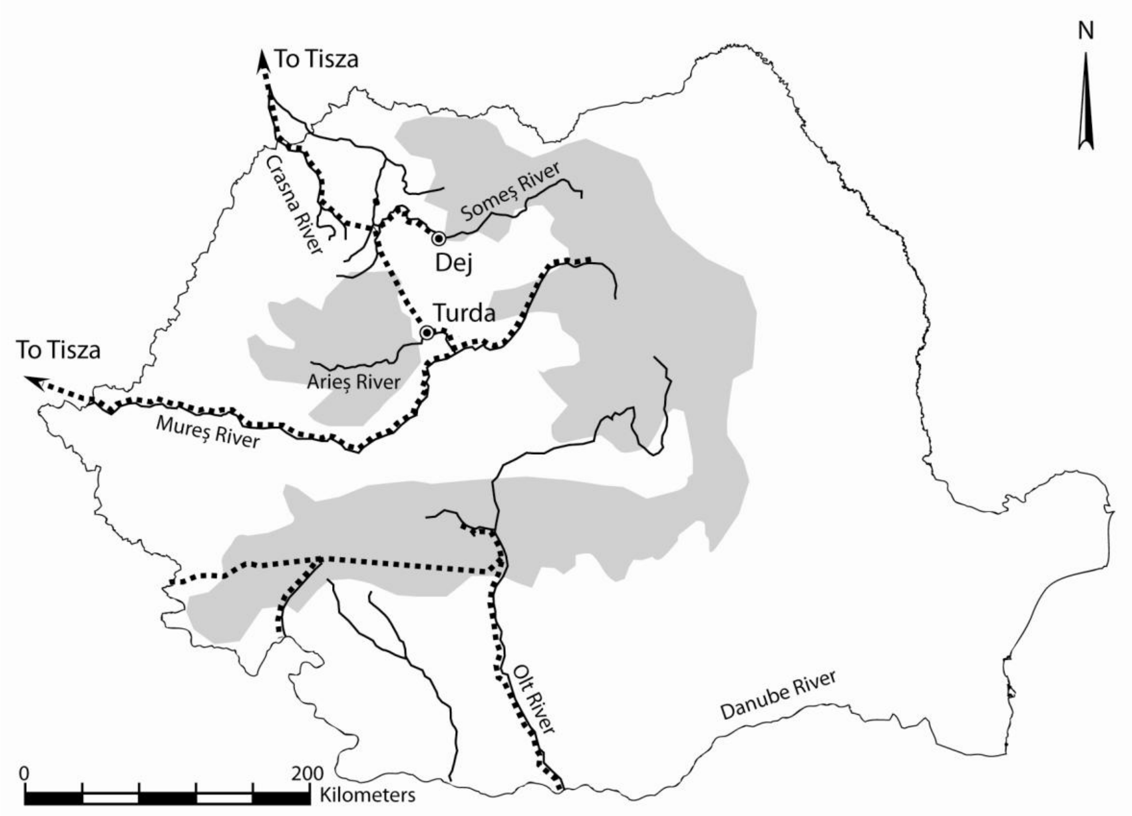


Figure 3.6: Pre-modern routes for the movement of salt from Transylvania to the west; note the distances which needed to be traversed on land (especially from Turda to the Meseş Gate). After Marc 2006: 157 and Chirilă and Matei 1986: Fig. 1.

when the Frankish king requested that Bulgarian inns not allow the sale of salt in Moravia, coming from either Transylvania or Maramureş to the northwest (Simon 2006: 92). By 1528, two salt mines were in operation in Turda, though a third, abandoned one also was in existence (Simon 2006: 93). Although the specifics of local production are unknown, records do indicate substantial quantities of salt from the whole of Transylvania in the 16th century were being moved (Simon 2006: 95). In this period, salt appears to be exported from Transylvania in only one direction, toward Bosnia and Serbia in the Balkan Peninsula.

Silver hoards in the area of the Meseş Gate and Şimleu argue strongly that a major impetus for the importance of this route throughout history was its usage as a route to transport salt into northern Pannonia. It became important because of the

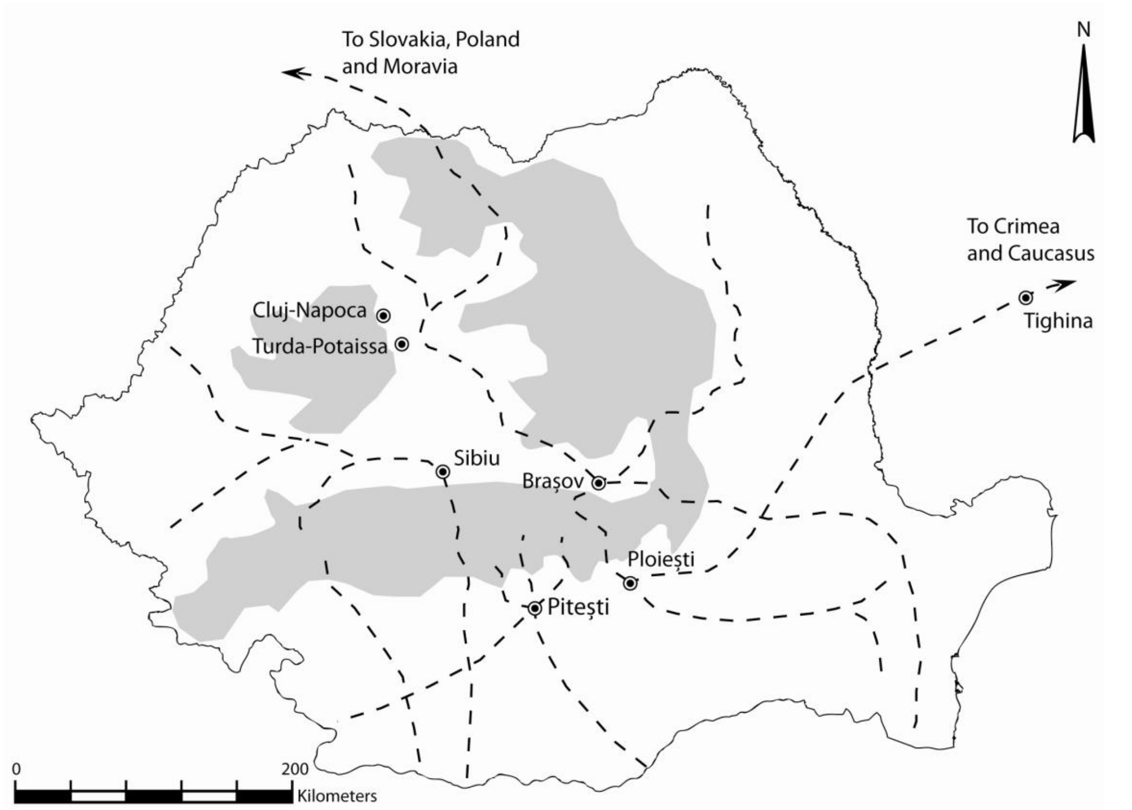


Figure 3.7: Historical transhumance routes in Romania. After Matley 1970: Fig. 1.

passage of specific commodities inside and outside of Dacia. Certainly other goods were moving as well, but the result was that major traffic was moving through the Meseş Gate. In order to facilitate and control this movement, important power centres were set up by ruling parties, which invested the area with even more importance.

In this respect, this network is similar to another one which emerged in the Medieval Period. Pastoralism in Transylvania used to be characterised by long-distance movements of sheep between summer pastures in the high mountains and winter pastures in the plains, making open pasture available year-round (Fig. 3.7). This was practiced by a small number of people coming from two main localities in Transylvania, Sibiu and Braşov. Although the intensive usage of these routes was created in the medieval period, the route through the Meseş Gate in Sălaj County is the exact same one as that used for the movement of salt through all periods. Although the Salt Road

may owe its resonance throughout history to the commodity of salt, other products were moving in and out of Transylvania in all periods along the same route. It is argued in Chapter 6 that the movement of animals on a large scale through the Meseş Gate may be attributed to the Roman period.

3.3.2. The river network

In the Transylvanian Basin, the Someş River and its tributaries kept the area well connected in the pre-modern period. Most of rivers are small to medium order streams which feed into three significant rivers: the Arieş, the Criş and the Someş, all of which originate in the western Apuseni Mountains. The Criş and the Someş are themselves tributaries of the Tisza River and the Arieş flows into the Mureş. The Someş is the largest of the Tisza tributaries, with a basin of nearly 15,000 km^2. It is formed by the convergence of two diametrically opposed headstreams: Someşul Mare, which forms in the Eastern Carpathians and flows southwest, and Someşul Mic, which forms in the Apuseni Mountains and flows northeast. To the west of Cluj-Napoca at Gilău, Someşul Mic itself forms at the convergence of Someşul Cald and Someşul Rece, which flow rapidly out of the Apuseni Mountains. They both cut their way through crystalline schist, granites and limestone of the mountains and as such have no real floodplains.

With the exception of the concentration of hillforts at Șimleu (see 6.2), most of the Dacian hillforts are located away from major rivers, and rural settlements do not tend to be located very close (Fig. 3.8). This is a supported by Oltean's (2007: 94) analysis of the Mureş Valley, in which very few Late Iron Age sites in general were located close (within 5 km) to rivers. This does not mean that they were not used as transportation, but that the land around them was not suitable for settlement for environmental or cultural reasons. Even more importantly, the distribution of hillforts in

Northwest Transylvania indicates that they were of use mainly for transportation north and west into Pannonia (the Zălau, Crasna, and Bârcău Rivers all eventually flow into the Tisza River). Since these appear to be established primarily to control and exploit mobility (see 4.1), it is reasonable to suggest that heavier commodities (*e.g.* salt) would have been moving west from Transylvania. It is interesting, however, that no fortified settlements have been detected at around the Someșul Mic River, which is the most convenient means of moving salt to the Someș River and into Pannonia. This means either that salt was being moved only in small quantities, or that there was an integrated communication system consisting of paths and rivers that was in operation before the Romans.

Rivers were a much more important part of the communication network in the Roman period when quarried stone needed to be moved in large quantities for construction and troops along the frontier needed to be regularly supplied. The *collegium nautorum*, associated with water transport, is attested in Roman Dacia, though not within the study area (Marc 2006: 153). This would mainly have been associated with the transport of commodities along the Mureş River, but certainly the Someş River would have made an important alternative to transport salt to northern Pannonia. The distribution of Roman forts and towns in relation to rivers (Fig. 3.8) indicates that, with the exception of the cordon along the Meseș Mountains, a preference for establishing these centres at the confluence of two or more main rivers. The advantages of these points were important from the point of view of both supply and power. Each single point could receive and control river traffic from multiple tributaries. From the point of view of supply, especially with regard to the fertile Someșul Mic River Valley, the water moves much faster at these points and provisions

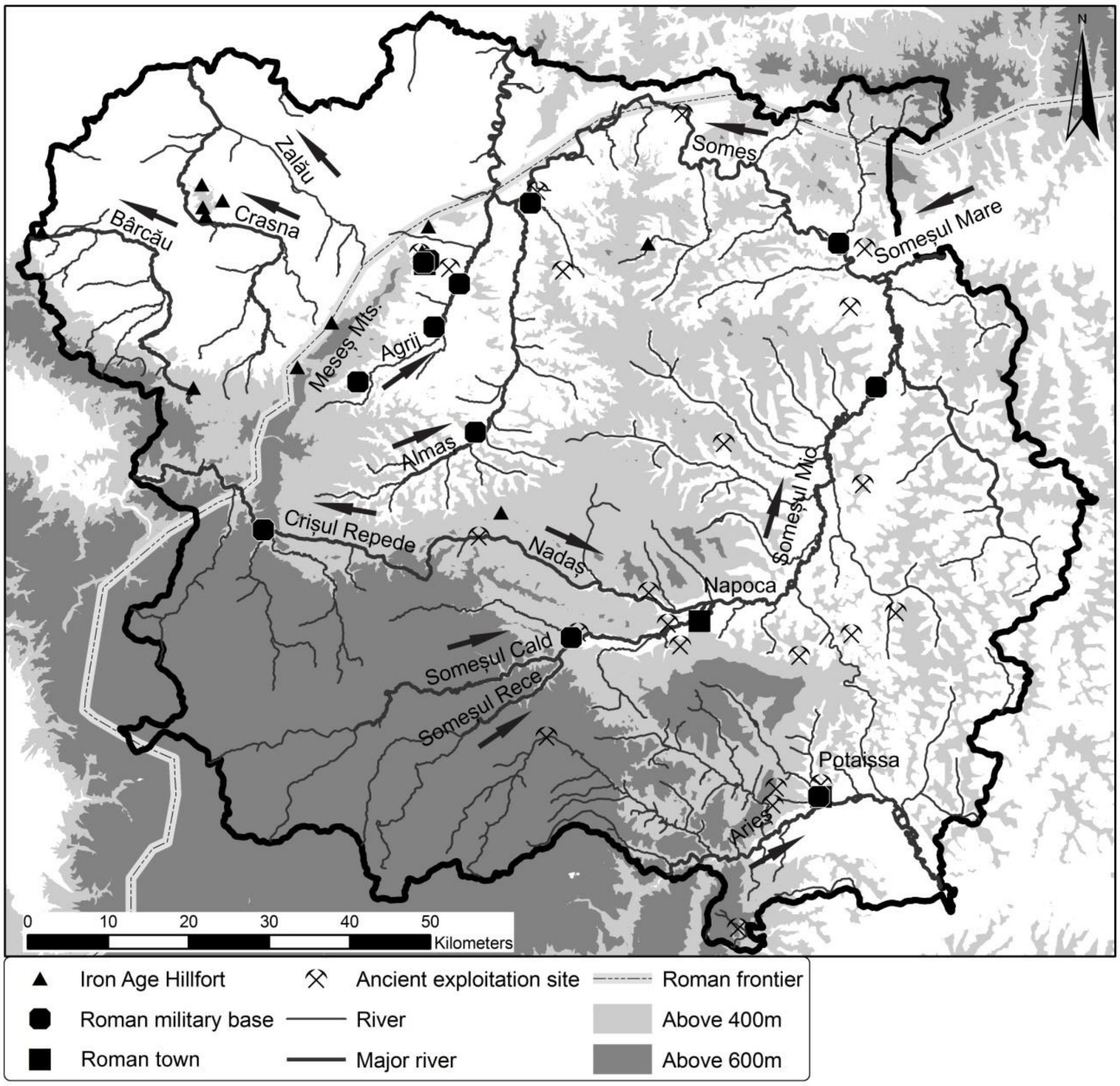


Figure 3.8: Navigability of rivers in Northwest Transylvania in relationship to settlements and mineral resources. Depicted rivers represent highest order streams, meaning those least likely to have changed since antiquity.

could reach other areas along the river quickly. The establishment of forts and *vici* at these points in the early years of the conquest also allowed for bridges to be built across these broad rivers (we know of one for certain at Potaissa) to facilitate wagon traffic. With the withdrawal of the Roman armies, the Someșul Mic appears to have played an increasingly important role in communication since such bridging points at the rivers appear to have been completely abandoned, with settlements appearing in the periphery of former towns and near to the river itself (see 6.3).

3.3.3. Roman roads

Admittedly, the state of knowledge about ancient roads in Dacia is not as extensive as we would like, but major field research has been conducted recently by F. Fodorean (2006). At many points, such as those near Porolissum, the path of ancient roads is traced only through the existing topography. Nevertheless, many certainties now exist. The Roman roads in Northwest Transylvania were constructed with a view toward connecting Apulum to Potaissa and Napoca, and subsequently to the cordon of forts along the Meseș *limes* (Fig. 3.9). This system was rapidly organised following the conquest, a fact which is known from a milestone at Aiton, indicating that the road connecting the *vici* of Napoca and Potaissa was already in place by 108 (CIL III, 16270). Napoca appears to be the central point from which troops and supplies would travel to reach both Căşeiu-Samum in the north and the Meseș cordon of forts to the west.

It seems certain that some of these roads were built upon pre-existing pathways utilised in the prehistoric period. The route from Potaissa to the Meseş Gate appears to closely follow the theoretical layout of the Salt Road. With only a few exceptions, the roads tend to follow the courses of the major rivers between the towns and military bases. The roads running to the west and to the north from Napoca appear to be the greatest improvements in the communication system. These allowed wagon traffic to carry supplies and commodities in these directions where river transport was not possible (to the west, the Nadaș River flows eastward and to the north, the tributaries of the Someșul Mic all flow southward). However, the fact that a number of Late Iron Age settlements were located in this river valley, and that no hillforts have been located around the Someșul Mic as it flows northward supports the notion that this too may have been built on a route utilised in the pre-Roman period. The most significant change

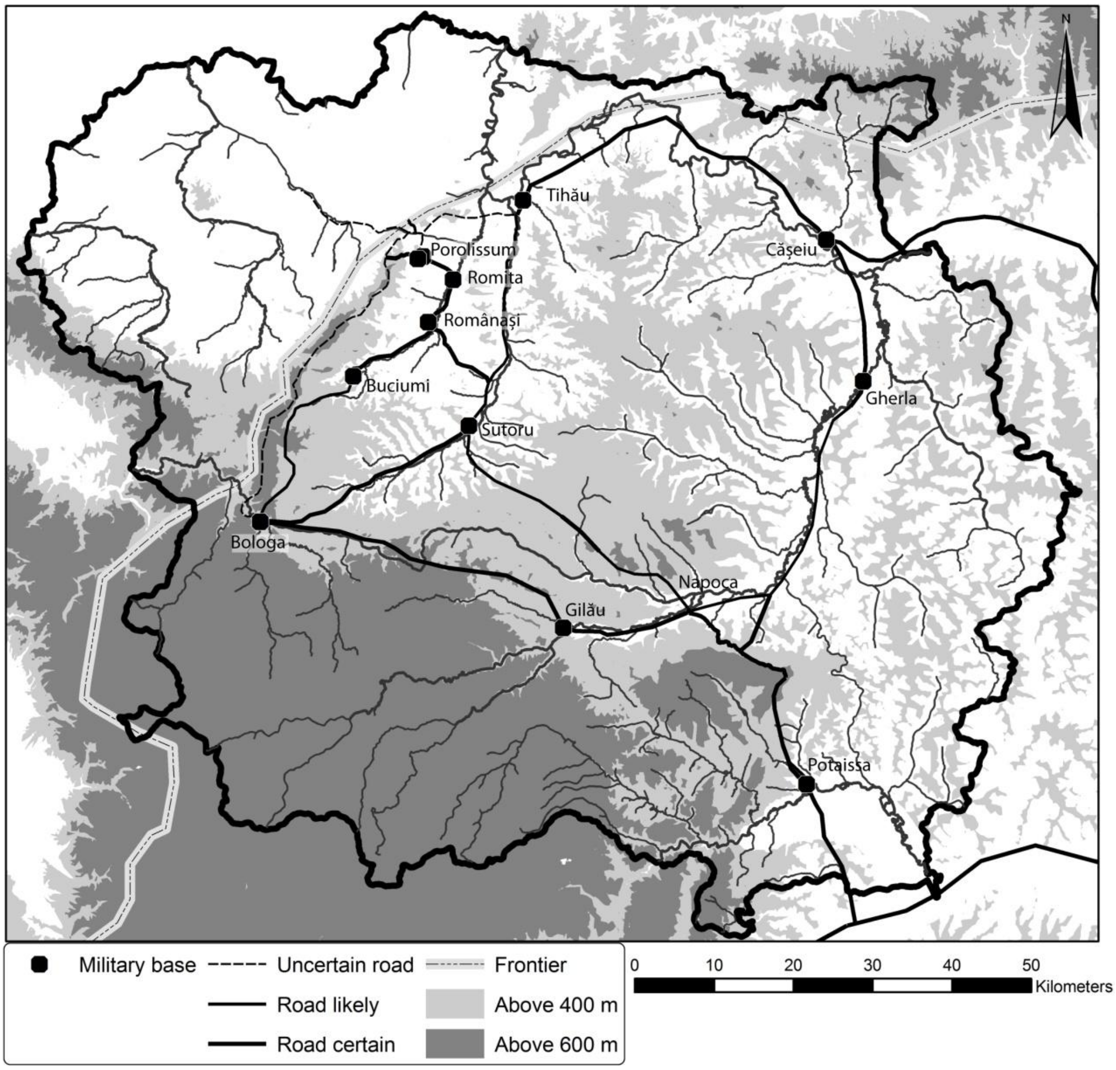


Figure 3.9: Roman road network in Northwest Transylvania.

with the installation of the road system was the decentring of the Meseș Gate area as the most important node in the communication network. More importance was given to Napoca, the end of the central spine from which all of the forts in Northwest Transylvania could be reached.

The road system did not simply stop at the edge of the Empire. It may not have been paved, but clearly there was some structure to the network outside of the Empire in Free Dacia which built upon the Salt Road. An uncertain road is indicated in Figure 3.9 heading toward Şimleu, following the agglomerated settlements which appear outside of

the Empire (see 6.1). The Zalău River could be used to travel northward, bypassing Șimleu which was such an important centre in the pre-Roman period, but there is good evidence for both people and goods moving into the Empire from Barbaricum. Therefore, foot and wagon traffic alike should have been facilitated just beyond the line of watchtowers.

Both functional and symbolic importance was placed on the road system throughout the Roman occupation. An inscription from Almaş indicates repairs were made in Northwest Transylvania as late as Maximinus Thracus as part of a wider programme in the Danube provinces (CIL III, 8060; Fodorean 2004). In the post-Roman period, however, roads appear to have diminished in importance as communication routes. Important bridging points across major rivers were abandoned only in one area do settlements appear to cluster around roads (see 6.3). This may be explained by reduced wagon traffic in general and the fact that the substantial population of soldiers along the Meseș Mountains which was supported by the provincial hinterland was no longer present. This made the main roads connecting Napoca to Sutoru and to Gilău and Bologa less vital.

Chapter 4: Settlement Patterns and Forms

This chapter presents the results of specific analyses of patterns of settlement types, density, layout and form over the entire study area from the first century BC to the fifth century AD and their interpretation. Despite limitations noted in Chapter 2, the database created for this project allows comparisons and contrasts to be made on a scale that has not previously been possible. Discussion has been separated into categories of hillforts, towns, military bases and rural settlements as a matter of convenience, and should not be taken as archaeologically viable distinctions. These are all interconnected within a complex system, and there are certainly examples of overlap: a number of major towns in Dacia are associated with military bases and some of the hillforts are more akin to fortified villages. At the end of the chapter we will return to the problem of settlement classification.

4.1. Hillforts

'Hillfort' is used to refer to what Romanian scholars call 'Dacian fortifications' (*fortificaţiile dacice*). This term is a matter of convention in Iron Age archaeology in other parts of Europe, and it is not an inappropriate term for these fortified settlements in Northwest Transylvania because every one of them is located on a hill or promontory. For Dacian settlements in the Orăştie Mountains, Glodariu (1983) makes the distinction between fortified settlements and fortresses, distinguished by the number of individuals it could accommodate at a given time in relationship to the total population. He also adds a third category of temporary fortifications. Horea Pop (2006)

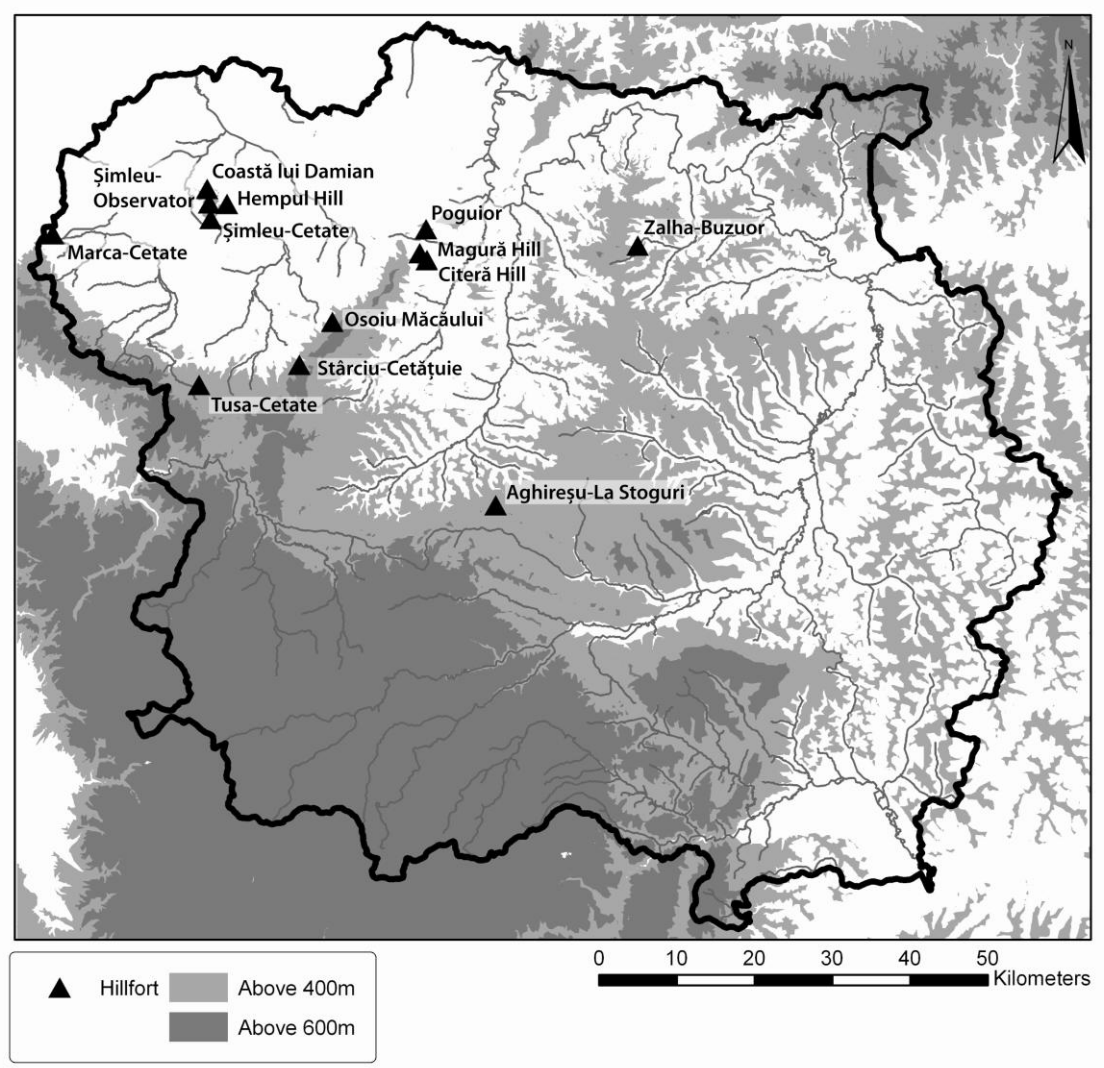


Figure 4.1: Distribution of hillforts in Northwest Transylvania

has conveniently summarised aspects of most of the hillforts in this region, drawing heavily from Glodariu's typology and classifying them according to size and fortifying elements. However, Oltean (2007: 80-84) has rightly noted that this differentiation is premature with so little archaeological investigation having taken place. Because there is no certain or universal means of sub-dividing Dacian fortified settlements, they are analysed together.

A total of 13 hillforts are situated within the study area, although one of them is only known from surface investigations and has not been confirmed by excavation (Zalha-Buzuor). Seven are arranged in the shape of an arc to the south around the hills

of Şimleu, the massif itself containing four more (Figure 4.1). Their proximity to the Meseş Gate argues strongly in favour of them having a strategic role in the supervision of traffic coming into and out of Transylvania. All of the hillforts, although on high promontories, are still located within the middle range of elevations (400-600 m). Only four (La Stoguri, Măgura Hill, Citeră Hill and Poguior fall within what would later be the administrative boundaries of the Roman Empire.

Absolute chronology is uncertain for most of these hillforts, but no less certain than in the Orăştie Mountains where a number have a long tradition of excavation (*cf*. Lockyear 2004: 35-36). Glodariu (1982) argued that the period between Burebista and Decebalus (*c*. 82 BC to 106 AD) is marked by the construction of the majority of hillforts in Dacia. However, Pop (2006) has shown that materials from a number of them also date to the second century BC or before. By comparing ceramic forms from his excavations at Şimleu to materials recovered from small sondages at other hillforts, he was also able to establish that most of these were functioning contemporaneously (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1: Area of hillforts in hectares and habitation dates. After data from Pop 2006.

Location	Area (ha)	Bronze Age	Hallstatt	2nd c. BC	1st c. BC	1st c. AD
Măgura Hill	7.00	x		x	x	x
Citeră Hill	6.00			x	x	
Șimleu-Observator	5.00	x	x	x	x	
Șimleu-Cetate	3.00	x		?	x	x
Osoiu Măcăului	0.60	x		x	x	
La Stoguri	0.40				x	x
Hempul Hill	0.30				x	x
Marca-Cetate	0.30			x	x	x
Stârciu-Cetățuie	0.30			x	x	x
Coasta Lui Damian	0.14	x			x	
Poguior	0.06			?	?	?
Zalha-Buzuor	N/A		x	x	x	
Tusa-Cetate	N/A					x

The most striking feature of the histories of the hillforts in this area is that, *contra* Glodariu (1982), at least nine hilltop settlements (69 per cent) were already in place before Burebista's rise to power in the first century AD (Table 4.1). Not all of them were fortified at this time, but the difficult topography makes it likely that safety and/or strategy entered into choice for settlement location. Late Iron Age fortifications certainly re-used elements of the Hallstatt phase at Observator, although the overall settlement space of the hillfort was reduced (Pop 2006: 40). Furthermore, where excavations have determined phases of usage and constructions (Măgura, Şimleu-Cetate, Şimleu-Observator), the settlements appear to have developed incrementally over long periods rather than as a unified plan in response to an immediate threat. The construction of hillforts, therefore, cannot solely be explained by conflict.

Pop (2006) has worked out phases at Măgura and Şimleu-Cetate (Fig. 4.2), but there is no means of comparing them since the chronology is based on different elements of the settlement. At Măgura the three horizons (the first horizon dates to the second half of second century BC to the first century BC; the second horizon to the first century BC to the first century AD; and the third to the first century AD) are based on ceramics found in dwellings and pits (Pop 2006: 48-51). At Şimleu it is based on elements of fortification: the largest extent of the fortifications at the base of the hill were constructed in the first century BC; a small circular fortification was created at the highest part of the hill in the last half of the first century AD; and a second line of ditch and palisade was constructed immediately behind that of the first phase in the beginning of the second century AD (Pop 2006: 35-39). This suggests continuous usage over the last two and a half centuries before the Roman conquest.

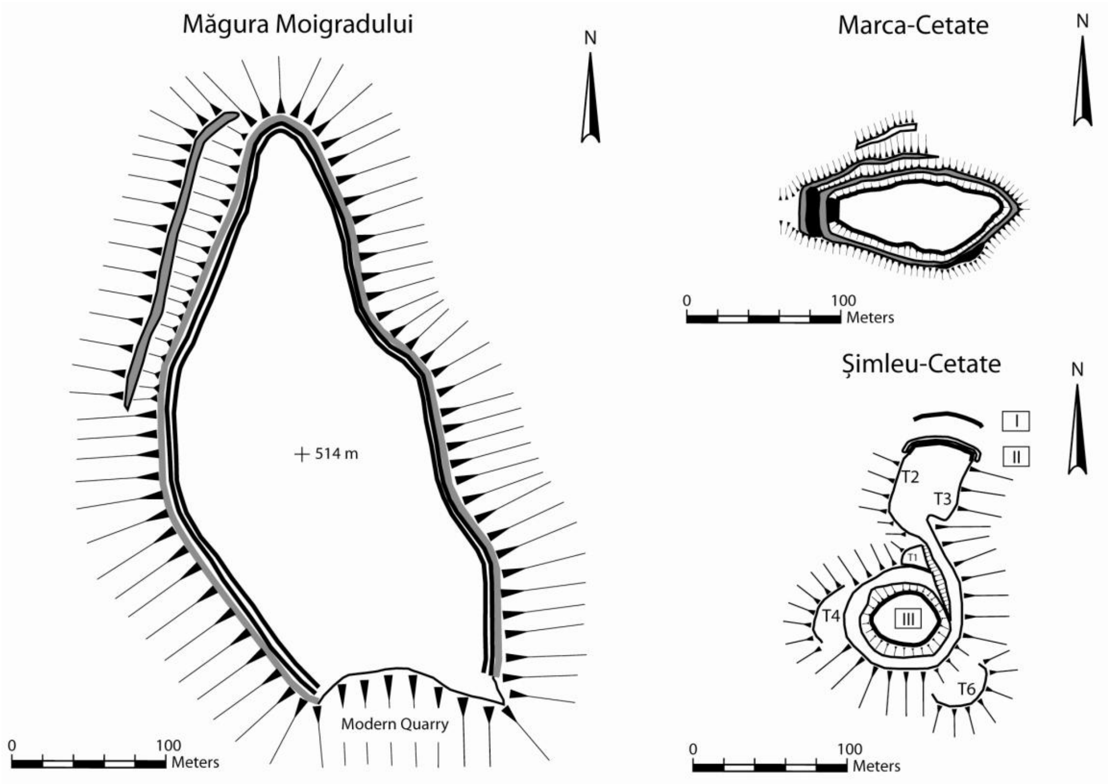


Figure 4.2: Plans of Măgura Moigradului, Marca-Cetate and Şimleu-Cetate for size comparison; bold lines indicate banks (black) and ditches (grey)

The construction of five of these hillforts in the second or first centuries BC on older Hallstatt or Bronze Age settlements, at least two of them fortified (Observator and Coasta lui Damian), may be more than coincidence. Interesting also is the fact that there is no evidence for continual settlement in the fifth through third centuries BC. It is reasonable to argue that the hillforts were constructed deliberately in the area of ancient abandoned settlements.

Of the fate of many of these hillforts we know substantially less. It is certain that all of them ceased to function after the Roman conquest, but it is uncertain how long before the conquest they fell into disuse. In the hillforts of the Orăştie Mountains, the case is more certain based on destruction layers and evidence for systematic dismantling of some structures, as well as the construction of a Roman camp at Sarmizegetusa Regia (Glodariu *et al.* 1996). In Northwest Transylvania, however, some larger and smaller

hillforts seem to have been abandoned over a century before the conquest; and there is no evidence that can demonstrate with certitude that the Romans were directly involved in the destruction or abandonment of hillforts in use in the first century AD in this area. Further comments can only be made with more excavation and better chronology.

Limited excavations on hillforts in this region allow for some estimations of the fortified area that they encompassed (Table 4.1; Figs. 4.2, 4.3). There is immense variation between the sizes, evidence for a clear hierarchy focused on two central locations in which multiple hillforts have been constructed: Moigrad (Măgura Hill and Citeră Hill) and Şimleu-Silvaniei (Observator and Cetate). In general, the hillforts here are marginally less varied in size than those in the Dacian heartland of the Orăştie Mountains, where investigated hillforts range between 0.5 to 11 hectares (Oltean 2007: 87). If we take the broadest range of possible dates into account for each hillfort, there does not seem to be any significant relationship between size and the time. True, the four largest hillforts are constructed earlier than some, but other hillforts of less than one hectare are also established very early.

In addition to natural advantages, the hillforts in Northwest Transylvania are fortified with lines of ditches and palisades, sometimes doubled up. Occasionally the palisades are reinforced with ramparts built of earth, small stones and wood as at Marca, Măgura Moigradului and both Şimleu hillforts. In this respect, the hillforts have little in common with their counterparts to the south in the Orăştie Mountains. Many hillforts in the Dacian heartland are fortified with stone. Although in some cases fortification ditches actually cut into stone, as at Şimleu and some areas of Măgura, there is no evidence any use was made of stone for the fortifications except as crushed-up filler for the earth banks. Wooden towers comprise part of the fortifications in the Orăştie Mountains, as well as outside of the hillforts to convey association with these

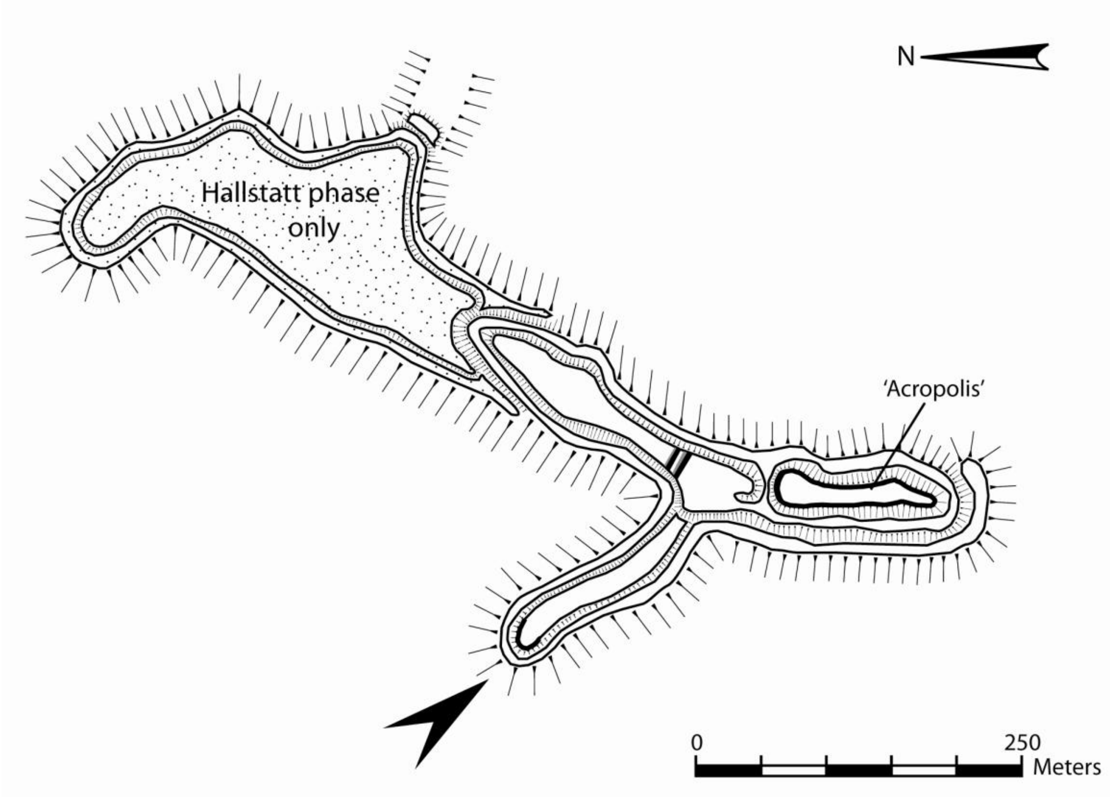


Figure 4.3: Plan of Şimleu-Observator; bold lines indicate banks and ditches. After Pop 2006: Pl 19.

monumental centres (Oltean 2007: 76-80). There is evidence for a few towers at Şimleu-Cetate and Observator, but otherwise these types of fortifications have not been detected in Northwest Transylvania. These hillforts represent a very different regional tradition of constructing the most visible elements of the settlement.

The largest hillforts (those over 3 hectares), those at Moigrad and Şimleu, utilise fortifications of ditches and palisades which wind their way either partially or fully around the hill on which they are situated. In three out of four cases (Citeră being the exception), access to the hillforts themselves is severely restricted, and even modest fortifications would have been effective in withstanding attacks. Furthermore, on the interior of the fortified area a number of additional palisades and ditches were set up within the forts at Şimleu, indicating that the partitioning of space was also important on

the interior. Therefore mere functionality is not a sufficient explanation for the fortifications of the larger hillforts.

Two smaller hillforts (under one hectare), Marca-Cetate and Mirşid-Poguior, also utilise double lines of circumvolutions. Poguior is particularly problematic because of the construction of a later Roman tower, and should perhaps be disregarded because of the uncertainty of its phases (Matei 1979b: 13; Gudea 1985: 178; Pop 2006: 24-25). At Marca-Cetate, where more is known, both walls appear to have had a palisade and at points the wall was reinforced with a wall of wood and rocks (Fig. 4.2). The second phase (first century AD) of the hillfort of Şimleu-Cetate has the same type of fortification on its uppermost peak, and these fortification types may emulate this type of architecture.

Within the context of the broader landscape, a number of comments can be made about social hierarchy reflected in the positioning of the hillforts. Social dominance is often expressed by controlling territory and freedom of movement through that territory. An individual or group of individuals at the top of a social hierarchy is able to control encounters with a greater freedom than those at the lower end (Hall 1966). The choice to settle on specific hills was a conscious decision. The Dacians had the means to make the surrounding terrain more accessible (as demonstrated by terracing at both Şimleu and hillforts in the Orăştie Mountains); and so if access remained restricted in accordance to the natural terrain, this too was a conscious decision. Any hill could be fortified, but those with lesser degrees of accessibility are interpreted as closer to the top of a regional social hierarchy.

To analyse relative degrees of accessibility, the area of the agricultural territory was measured. The four largest hillforts were at the top of the settlement hierarchy (Table 4.2); and there is a strong correlation between the extent of hillforts and their

accessibility. Access to the largest hillforts at Şimleu-Observator, Şimleu-Cetate, and Măgura is constrained by an irregular terrain. Coasta lui Damian is a smaller hillfort which is also restricted, although this can perhaps be explained by its importance as a Bronze Age fortification. Citeră is very accessible; however, its contemporaneous association with Măgura may explain this exception.

Table 4.2: Agricultural territories and areas of hillforts

Location	Agricultural territory (ha)	Area of hillfort (ha)
Şimleu-Observator	2044	5.00
Măgura Hill	2267	7.00
Stârciu-Cetăţuie	2329	0.30
Coasta Lui Damian	2435	0.14
Osoiu Măcăului	2775	0.60
Şimleu-Cetate	2876	3.00
Zalha-Buzuor	2960	N/A
Hempul Hill	3004	0.30
Citeră Hill	3015	6.00
Mirşid-Poguior	3166	0.06
Marca-Cetate	3408	0.30
Aghireşu-La Stoguri	3495	0.40
Tusa-Cetate	3629	N/A
Average	2877	2.27

The use of space within the hillforts of this area, where it is known, varies extensively. Access to Şimleu-Cetate was reached from the north on a gentle hillslope which was heavily fortified. A modern path which may be based on an ancient one curves around the peak to the east, providing access to the highest part of the settlement (the ‘acropolis’). The highest peak was likely fortified in the second phase of construction, though medieval layers have obscured interpretation. This circular area was around 960 m^2 with a maximum height of 372 meters. The steep slope on parts of the hillfort served as an excellent natural means of fortification. Five terraces were constructed on the slopes of the hill (Fig. 4.2). On one of these terraces (T2) evidence of metal processing was discovered alongside some other dwellings. Circular sunken structures and rectangular post-built surface structures were also found on T3. On the terrace just north of the summit (T1) were located several layers of Late Iron Age usage,

but details about built structures have not been clarified. The terraces served to provide interior living space in an otherwise difficult terrain, but also to minimise erosion. The workshop, the architecture of some of the structures (including clay floors), and the terracing all indicate a permanent character to the interior settlements rather than temporary or sporadic usage.

At Şimleu-Observator, access was reached from the west on a hill slope which was fortified at its entrance. From here, one needed to climb up the hill and turn either left (north) or right (south) from which different areas of the hillfort could be reached. To the right one could reach the highest fortified area. An oval plateau which comprises about 2000 m^2 with a maximum altitude of 597 meters was fortified with ditch dug directly into the mica schist and a double palisade, one on an earth bank behind the ditch, and another 13 m behind it with posts intruding directly into the rock. The rest of the settlement was differentiated from the northern area by two sets of ditch and palisade. Here 13 Late Iron Age structures, eight fireplaces, and eight kilns were excavated (Pop 2004). The entire area of the Dacian occupation was utilised in the Hallstatt phase of settlement.

Only a small portion of Măgura Moigradului has been excavated, but this has revealed the chronology of the hillfort and changes to its internal layout. Excavations focused for a large part on the southern edge near the modern quarry, which is also the area most at risk for erosion. For the horizon dating from the second half of the second century BC to the first century BC, four sunken dwellings and 80 pits were excavated. For the horizon dating from the first century BC to the first century AD, one surface dwelling and six pits were excavated. For the last horizon, dating to the first century AD, 27 surface dwellings and 25 pits were excavated (Pop 2006: 48-51). The dwellings in all periods were small and few contained any evidence for hearths, something which

argues for a finite or temporary character. Using these numbers as a representative sample, Pop (2006: 50-51) estimated the population for each horizon: 240 for the first horizon, 60 for the second and 1,625 for the third.

The pits of Măgura are discussed in Chapter 5, but a number of other interesting features in the fortified area are worthy of note. In the eastern zone of the 1984 excavations, one of the dwellings contained two fragments of roof tiles. Another contained a coin of Hadrian. In the western part, a circular cistern was discovered made of local stone and lined with mortar. The chronological window indicates that the hillfort was re-used in the early years or provincialisation. The excavators interpreted these finds as evidence for the presence of a small Roman garrison in the first years of provincialisation, though there is nothing in particular which argues for a military character (Gudea *et al.* 1986: 126-128). We cannot rule out civilian tradesmen, traders or surveyors.

Several architectural types are found within these structures. Primarily, these consist of sunken dwellings (*c.* 1 meter in depth), either circular or rectangular in shape and generally around 12 m^2 in area. At Şimleu-Cetate, one of these circular dwellings is supported by a central post supporting a roof. At Măgura, four sunken circular dwellings were found with two opposite post-holes, as well as one rectangular structure with post-holes in the corners. Semi-sunken structures (0.2-0.5 meters in depth) are also found at Şimleu-Cetate, Şimleu-Observator, Marca, Măgura. These are generally built directly on the soil and supported by wood beams and/or posts. In addition, structures have also been identified along the stockades of the hillfort, with a roof projecting out and supported by interior posts. With the exception of the latter, similar types of architecture are found in the countryside of Dacia in all periods (see 4.4).

Whilst the fortification styles of the hillforts of Northwest Transylvania and the Orăştie Mountains bear little in common, they share some similarities in layout. Both have compartmentalised space, reflected in banks and ditches or in the natural topography. At Piatra Craivii, as at Şimleu-Cetate and Observator, a large promontory is situated within the fortifications proper, although the structures upon it have been destroyed by a medieval castle (Berciu *et al.* 1965). At Grădiştea Muncelului too there is a significantly higher area where the main fortifications are centred, as well as an extra-mural area with stores, workshops, sanctuaries, and water storage were all located (Daicoviciu 1972).

It is tempting to distinguish between Late Iron Age hillforts which housed large economically active settlements (fortified settlements) and those which were for a large part devoid of settlement and served as a strictly defensive role (refuge fortifications or citadels). Excavations at Manching in Germany, however, have shown that areas inside the fortifications were not uniformly occupied (Maier 1986). Pop (2006: 57) considered Citeră a refuge fortification, but the imposition of a later Roman fort as well as the fact that most of the internal area has not been excavated make this impossible to prove.

4.1.1. Hillforts and associated settlements

In the Orăştie Mountains, associated settlements are frequently found on the slopes of hills, usually on artificial terraces (*cf.* Oltean 2007: 88-92). Within the study area, this only occurs around Şimleu-Cetate and Măgura, although this could be due to archaeological intervention focused almost exclusively on internal space at other hillforts. Nevertheless, some finds (a hoard and an isolated find) do occur within the agricultural territory of the hillforts, suggesting the possibility of a more dispersed community than the nucleated activity around Şimleu and Măgura. Four settlements of

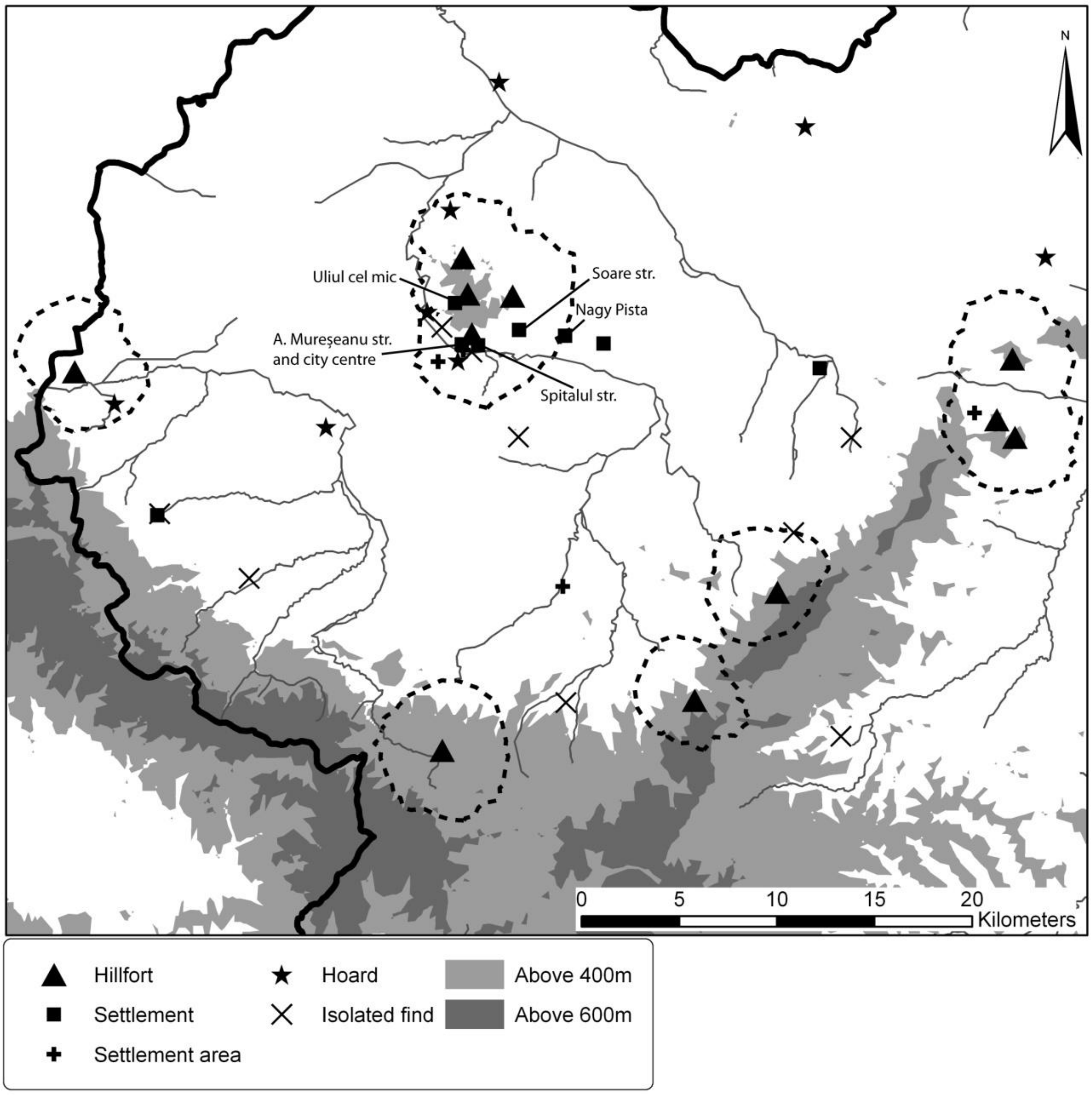


Figure 4.4: Associated settlements and activity around the Şimleu hillforts. Dashed lines indicate agricultural territories.

the Late Iron Age are located along the base of the Cetate Hill, all at lower elevations (Fig. 4.4). In addition, just to the south along the Crasna River, an assemblage of Dacian artefacts was discovered. All of these appear to take advantage both of their proximity to the fortified centre as well as the course of the river for transportation and communication. Knowledge of these sites mainly comes from rescue excavations, and unfortunately there are no clues as to whether the origin of these settlements predates or postdates the establishment of the hillforts.

A semi-sunken structure was excavated on the hill slope of Uliul cel Mic supported by posts on one side of the structure (Pop 1995). In size and layout it resembles other structures found within the Şimleu hillforts. The excavation of the house at A. Mureşeanu Street shows that it was not peasantry who lived outside of the fortifications. The elaborate multi-roomed structure with a lime floor, a terracotta statue and over 100 Dyracchium *drachmae* reflects the social and political status of the associated hillfort, as at Sarmizegetusa Regia. The location of settlements at the bottom of the slopes of the Şimleu Hills in the Dacian period, and their subsequent abandonment in the Roman period indicate their political and social ties to the hillforts of Cetate and Observator. They can be viewed as satellite settlements in the same way as the settlements of Sarmizegetusa Regia, Deva, Costeşti, and Cucuiș in the Orăştie Mountains (Oltean 2007: 88-92).

The settlements do not show evidence for any specialised activities. If all of these settlements were contemporaneous, this most closely represents the form of a dispersed village, as the four main settlements spread over a rather large area covered by the modern town. In studies of the Dacian heartland, however, dispersed villages tend to be found only in upland areas (Glodariu 1983; Gheorghiu 2001; Oltean 2007). In no other areas of ancient Dacia that have been studied do pre-Roman dispersed villages favour lowlands; and so this is hardly a typical situation. As these all fall within the previously-defined agricultural territory of the Şimleu-Cetate hillfort, the settlements at the base of the hill may have served an agricultural role, exploiting the rich soils of the river valley adjacent to them.

Very recently, salvage excavations on the slopes of Măgura uncovered a number of dwellings, some carved in the bedrock, some of these had visible hearths and storage pits indicating domestic usage (Soare 2009). As details of the excavation are still

emerging, it is difficult to compare these houses to the ones at Şimleu, but the fact that they are present on the slopes of the hill and carved into the rock, away from water resources, shows the effort these individuals made to dwell close to the hillfort.

4.1.2. Contextualising hillforts

The idea that these hillforts were intentionally situated at every natural route into Transylvania, organised by a central authority under Burebista and/or Decebalus is an argument grounded in nationalistic archaeology. Recent alternative arguments put forth are that in addition to defending intra-Carpathian Transylvania they served a variety of different functions based on resources and earlier centres of power (Diaconescu 2004: 122-128); and that they were competing elite residences with different expressions of identity manifested through practices such as architecture and hoarding (Lockyear 2004: 69-70).

How best to understand Late Iron Age hillforts in their proper context? The concentration of hillforts in the northwest area of the study region shows that a concern with supervising commercial routes, the movement of people and goods rather than the goods themselves. No Dacian fortification has been found around the salt mines of Potaissa or rich agricultural land of the Someşul Mic river valley which were both heavily exploited in the Roman period. The situation along the Meseş Mountains implies that other passages besides the Meseş Gate were also being supervised.

On the one hand evidence for size, accessibility, silver hoards, industrial activity and associated settlement agglomeration appear to confirm that Şimleu was some kind of political, social and administrative centre, if not one of central importance for the immediate pre-Roman period. An exclusively military population at these hillforts is, however, not suggested by the evidence. In Dacia, there are very few indications that

any Late Iron Age rural settlements (nor related settlements in Roman period Free Dacia) were enclosed. Thus fortifications represented a very different conceptualisation of settlement space from unenclosed settlement. At Şimleu, there does not seem to be any archaeologically-detectable differentiation between the structures on the inside and outside of the boundary; and wealthy hoards are found outside of the hillforts as well as inside (see 6.2). Wealth itself does not seem to have been a factor in this division of living space. The hillfort interiors are compartmentalised as best represented by the Şimleu hillforts. These layered spatial categories are represented nowhere away from the hillforts, and can be attributed to a social hierarchy that is not present in the wider countryside.

The impetus for change happened before Burebista or Decebalus, but social changes were probably crystallised under these leaders as related by the written sources. In this sense, the connection with the past becomes meaningful. The hillforts built on older settlements, if built by a local population, may reveal the beginnings of this change in social order. This came about not with the accumulation of wealth, but through the creation of local ancestors who lived centuries before on these visually impressive hills. In some cases these settlements were probably in ruins, but mounds of earth and ditches would have still been visible for the massive Bronze Age and Hallstatt fortifications. The location of the hillforts at strategic points able to control the movement of people and goods through difficult terrain certainly maintained this power structure, but it was not a single cause of it. Nevertheless, the fact that such a pattern exists is a testament to pre-Roman routes of communication between larger and smaller hillforts in the Şimleu Depression.

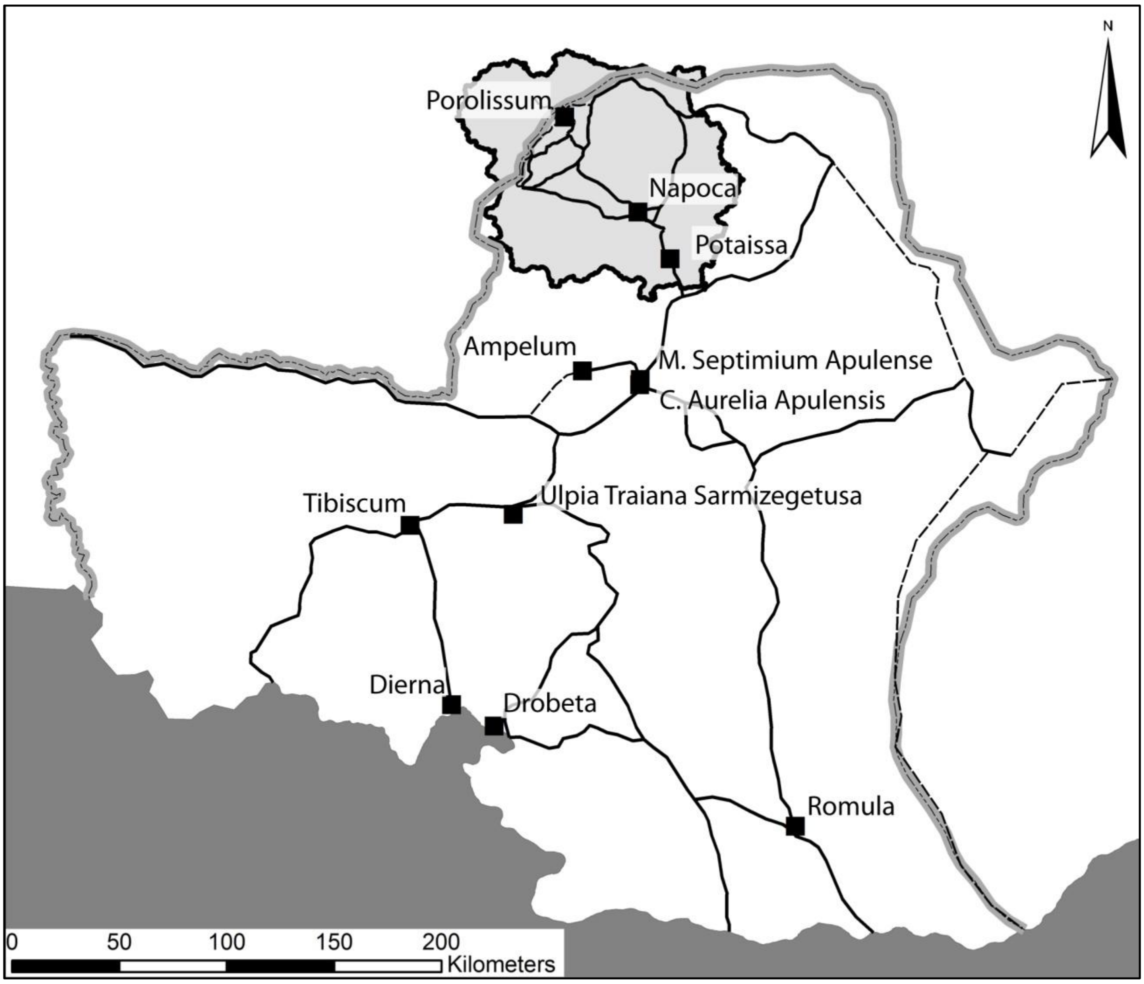


Figure 4.5: Towns in Roman Dacia with study area indicated.

4.2. Major urban centres

In Northwest Transylvania, three towns, Napoca, Porolissum and Potaissa, originated as small planned *vici* immediately after the conquest under Trajan (Fig. 4.5). Of the three, only one was certainly the direct result of military garrisoning (Porolissum), but military disposition played the single most important role in the growth and eventual form of all of them. Their subsequent development after Trajan followed very different courses (Table 4.3).

For over a decade systematic excavations of the legionary base of Potaissa have been carried out under Bărbulescu (*et al.* 2001; 2002; 2003; 2004; 2005; 2006; 2007; 2009). However the excavations have been confined to the fortified area which was

home to the *legio V Macedonica* from 168/169, and all our understanding of the sprawling urban settlement derives from earlier chance finds, salvage excavations and written sources. Based on a reference by Ptolemy, it is held that this settlement derives from a pre-Roman settlement named *Patruissa* (Bărbulescu 1997: 7). However, a small number of chance finds over the course of two centuries, all from uncertain contexts (including Late La Tène serpent bracelets, a necklace, a scyphate coin and a *tetradrachma*), are not enough to prove that there was any substantial pre-Roman settlement in the area (Crişan *et al.* 1992: 403-404).

Table 4.3: Dates of official grants of status to towns in Northwest Transylvania

Town	Trajan	Hadrian	M. Aurelius	Commodus	S. Severus
Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa	*colonia*	*colonia*	*colonia*	*colonia*	*colonia*
Drobeta	military base	*municipium*	*municipium*	*municipium*	*colonia*
Napoca	*vicus*	*municipium*	*municipium*/ *colonia* (?)	*colonia*	*colonia* *ius Italicum*
Romula	*vicus*	*municipium*	*municipium*	*municipium*	*colonia* (?)
Aurelia Apulensis	military base	military base	*municipium*	*colonia*	*colonia*
Apulum	military base	military base	military base	*municipium*	*municipium*
Potaissa	*vicus*	*vicus*	military base	military base	*municipium* *ius Italicum* *colonia* (?)
Porolissum	military base	military base	military base	military base	*municipium*
Tibiscum	military base	military base	military base	military base	*municipium*
Dierna	military base	military base	military base	military base	*municipium*
Ampelum	*vicus*	*vicus*	*vicus*	*vicus*	*municipium* (?)

The *vicus* of Potaissa is attested epigraphically by AD 108 on a milestone at Aiton (CIL III, 1627), but it was not of much importance until the Marcomannic Wars. The Fifth Macedonian legion set up camp at Potaissa between 168 and 169, and began the construction of the Potaissa stone fortress on Cetate Hill by 170. The settlement was granted *municipium* status under Septimius Severus (CIL III, 913=7689), but its fate after this is uncertain. On one hand, Ulpianus reports that the same emperor also granted Potaissa *colonia* status (*Dig* l. 1. 9); but an inscription of certain post-Severan date,

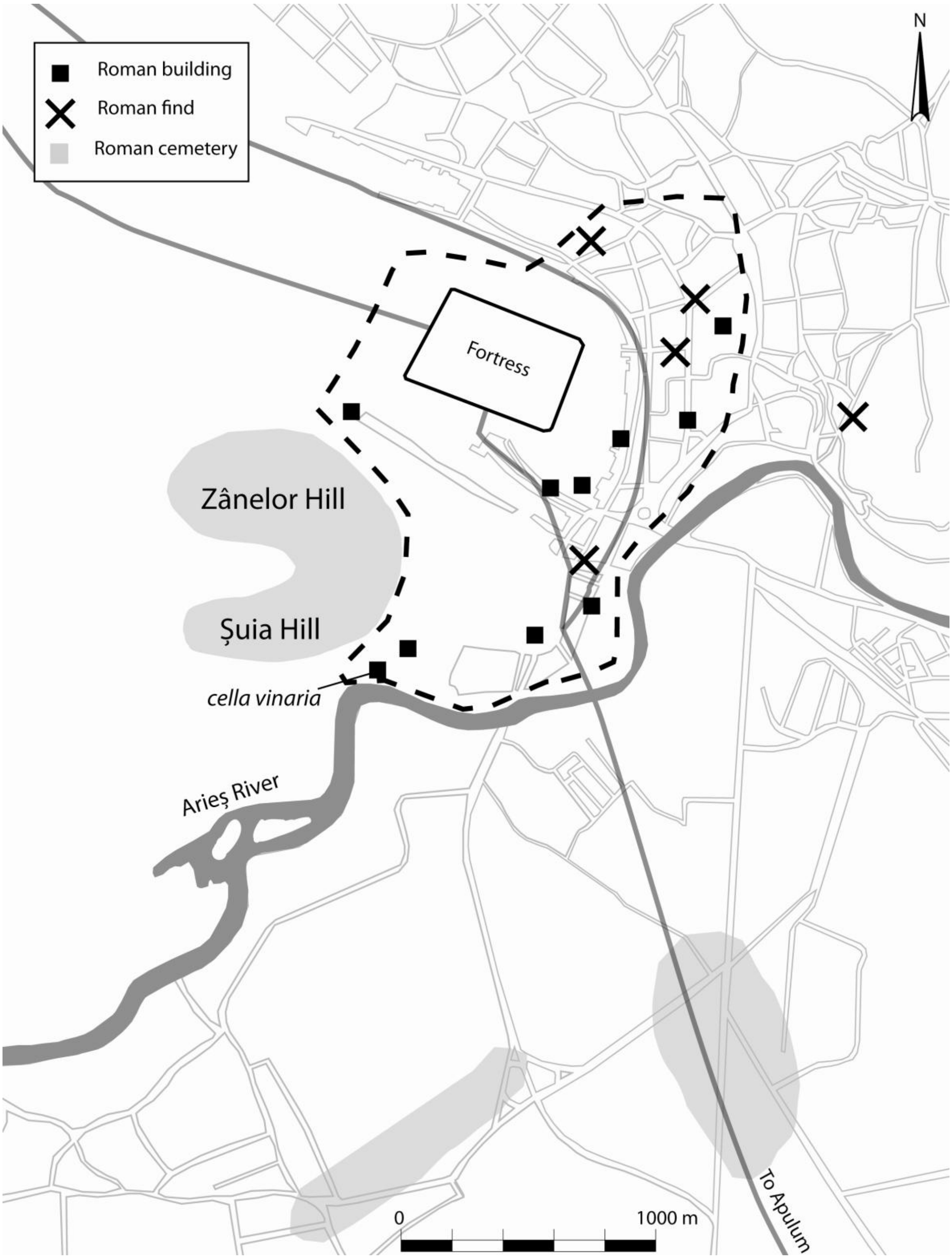


Figure 4.6: Layout of Roman Potaissa with possible extent.

probably dating to Caracalla, also refers to a *municipium Septimium Potaissense* (CIL III, 7807). This has led Bărbulescu (1992: 123; 1994b: 84) to interpret Potaissa as the

location of two officially recognised towns (one developing across the river and a second from the legionary *canabae*), a situation which is known to have occurred at Apulum (Diaconescu 2004: 103-118) and may have occurred at Porolissum (see *infra*). Ardevan (1998: 60) argues alternatively that this represents a rapid promotion from *vicus* to *colonia* as a reward for service in the Marcomannic Wars. This is a much more likely situation. If we take into account the extent of the archaeological finds of the Roman period, Potaissa was probably the largest urban centre in Northwest Transylvania by the third century (Table 4.6). This was likely to have been spurred by a post-Marcomannic War promotion of the town rather than the initial legionary garrisoning.

Although the extent of finds in the modern town is over 200 hectares including the fort (*cf*. Bărbulescu 1987: Fig. 4), this does not take into account that a number of isolated finds were found re-used, in the modern cemetery or buildings. A much more likely estimate takes into account the extent of evidence for Roman building materials, using burial sites as the boundaries of the formal town (Fig. 4.6). If this is taken as somewhat accurate, then Potaissa appears to have developed out of a linear roadside *vicus* adjacent to the fortress and expanding towards the Arieş River. A building interpreted as a *cella vinaria* on Şuia Hill was certainly active in the mid-third century, but perhaps not long before it (Cătinaş and Bărbulescu 1979). In the main area to the south of the fort there appears to be an intersection of two roads here, one circling around the fort to the north and another emerging out of the southern side of the fort, both of which merge to cross the river at a point where the remains of a Roman bridge were found. The Arieş River seems to act as southern boundary to the expanse of the town since extensive cemeteries have been located to the south along the road but there is little evidence for structures. There is no archaeological evidence to support a second

town to the south of the river as has been suggested (Bărbulescu and Cătinaş 1992: 123-124; Bărbulescu 1994b: 84-85). Cemeteries to the south may indicate a relocation of burial space, since town settlement and associated agricultural activity (as the *cella vinaria* indicates) may have been expanding into the western cemetery. Supporting this are a number of burials in the southern cemetery of third or fourth century date (see 5.1).

The Roman town of Napoca is completely covered by the modern city and only chance finds and rescue archaeology have provided information about its nature. Even though the quality of excavations has varied over time, we still know much more about Napoca than the towns of Potaissa or Porolissum (Fig. 4.7). Scholars have argued for a substantial pre-Roman settlement of the same name, as at Potaissa (Mitrofan 1964: 197-214; 1976: 197; Daicoviciu 1974: 25; 1977: 921). Despite numerous traces of the Bronze Age Coţofeni culture, throughout both the modern town and its surrounding area, and a few Hallstatt deposits, relatively few vestiges of La Tène activity have been recovered, and usually from uncertain locations (Crişan *et al.* 1992: 138, 145-146). However, no La Tène layers have been recorded in any salvage excavations where natural soil has been reached in an area of around 1500 m^2 in total (Daicoviciu 2004: 117). It is best to regard Napoca as a Roman creation, named after a geographical feature like a river.

The milestone from Aiton establishes that a *vicus* at Napoca existed before AD 108 (CIL III, 1627). The earliest archaeological evidence for Roman occupation here are two layers of Trajanic date in the northern area of the town, excavated at V. Deleu Street (Table 4.4). Distinct phases of the city fortifications within a brief period, one of wood and earth and one of stone, indicate rapid organisation and expansion of the urban space. Only a 7 m stretch of the original fortification has been discovered (Crişan 1996:

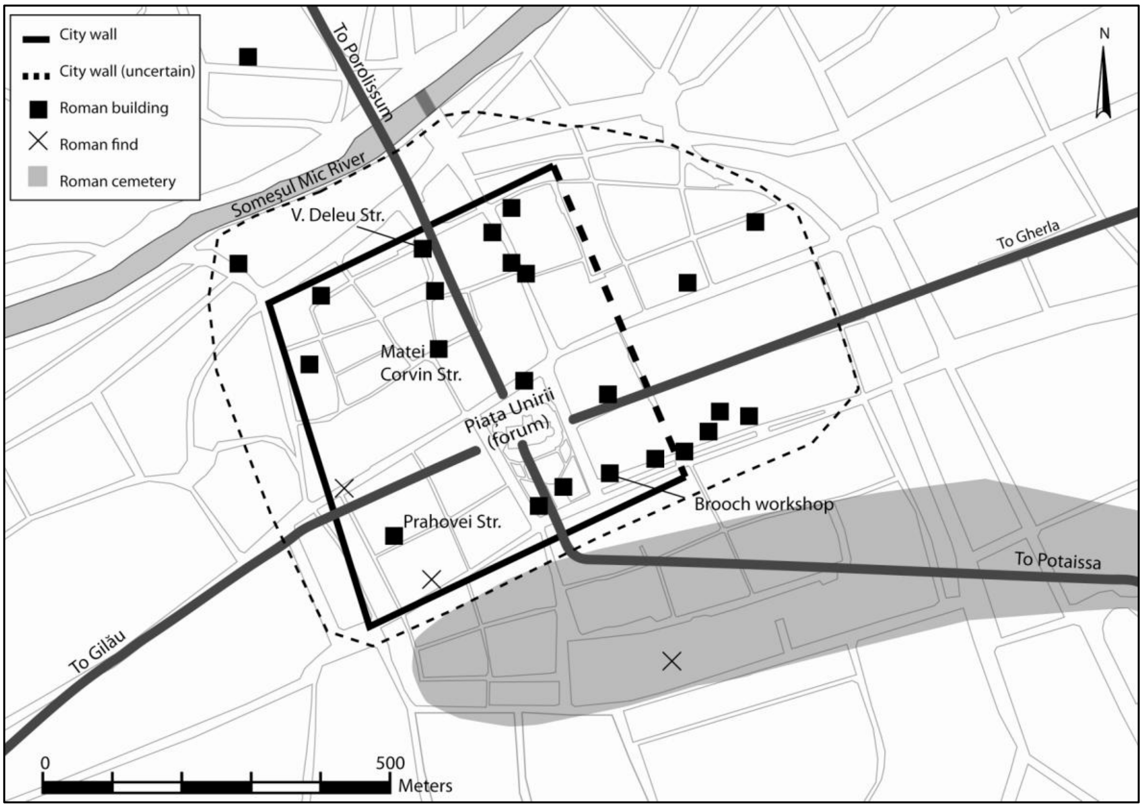


Figure 4.7: Plan of Roman Napoca based on current knowledge, with possible extent indicated.

386-387). This fortification was covered by a Roman house, and is interpreted as surviving only for a short period, into the middle or second half of the second century. In contrast, excavations to the south in the modern Piaţa Unirii revealed only one timber phase (Alicu *et al.* 1995). The earliest phase of the occupation was centred on the Someşul Mic River, where a bridge had been constructed across. Diaconescu (2004: 117-118) argues that the town was based at the junction of two roads, one running north-south connecting Potaissa to Porolissum, another connecting the auxiliary bases at Gilău and Gherla. At the intersection of this road within the town is found the forum, beneath the modern Piaţa Unirii. It seems much more likely that the entire system was laid out together with foresight. The stationing of a small unit with an associated settlement at the bridge across the Someş would have made sense in the early days of the occupation.

The town was granted *municipium* status under Hadrian (becoming *municipium Aelium Napocense*) between the beginning of his reign and AD 124 (CIL III, 14465). Associated with this event is a third timber phase which is on a different orientation from the earlier ones. The earlier orientation ran southeast-northwest, while all buildings from the third timber phase and later are oriented closer to cardinal north. This indicates that surveyors had laid out the *cardo* and *decumanus maximus* by this time. This phase is found in other areas of the town as well, indicating the growth of the settlement to the south.

Under Marcus Aurelius (or perhaps Commodus) Napoca was granted *colonia* status (CIL III, 963=7726). The construction of the town wall around the precinct is associated with this period. The stone wall has been located on the north, south, and west sides of the ancient city. This wall was constructed of large blocks of limestone in *opus quadratum*, with a width of 1.80 meters. The enclosed precinct was almost square in shape covering a surface of around 25 hectares (Voişian *et al.* 2000: 268).

Table 4.4: Chronology of urban development at Napoca based on excavations at Str. V. Deleu (Cociş *et al.* 1995), Str. Prahovei (Crişan 1996), Piaţa Unirii (Alicu *et al.* 1995) and Monumentul Memorandiştilor (Rusu-Bolindeţ 2007: 99).

Phase	Description	Chronology
Timber I	Post-built structures, only in N part of town	Immediately post-conquest
Timber II	Post-built structures and hearths; possible construction of brooch workshop in SE part of town	Trajanic or Hadrianic
Timber III	Existing buildings expanded, street grid in place; possible construction of brooch workshop in SE part of town	Hadrian to Antoninus Pius
Stone I	Substantial construction of buildings in stone, including the brooch workshop; possible construction of city wall	Marcus Aurelius to Septimius Severus
Stone II	Installations and repairs to existing buildings; possible construction of city wall; a fire in this phase occurs some time after the beginning of the reign of Severus Alexander; possible re-use of monuments for building repairs and funerary monuments	Septimius Severus to the withdrawal of Roman administration
Stone III	Open hearths placed by walls which are still standing; re-use of monuments for building repairs and funerary monuments	Fourth to sixth centuries

The origin of the third town, Porolissum, is tied to the establishment of Roman forts on Pomet Hill and Citeră Hill shortly after the conquest, just a short distance south from the abandoned hillfort complex of Măgura Hill. The earliest mention is on a military diploma dating to *c*. AD 106, suggesting that this fits into the broader pattern of rapid provincialisation seen at Napoca and Potaissa (CIL XVI, 160). With the re-organisation of the provinces under Hadrian, it is likely that Porolissum became the capital of Dacia Porolissensis given the relationship to the name. It followed a path of slower development and expansion than the other towns on the interior. Within half a century the fort on Pomet Hill was reconstructed in stone and a sizeable civilian district developed along the road to the east and to the south of the fort (Fig. 4.8; Table 4.5). The 5000-5500-seat amphitheatre was constructed in stone by AD 157 (CIL III, 836), coinciding with the abandonment of the auxiliary fort on the location of the future forum (Matei 2003; De Sena 2009). Under Septimius Severus the town became *municipium Septimium Porolissense* (CIL III, 913=7689). This phase of the settlement is associated with significant growth and the expansion of stone structures. The mature forum of the town coinciding approximately with the reign of Severus, currently the focus of the Porolissum Forum Project, extended over 2.5 ha, with what appears to be a basilica on the north side of a central courtyard and *porticus*, *tabernae* and other buildings along the west, south and east sides.

Like Potaissa, epigraphic evidence at Porolissum suggests the possibility of a second urban centre with an official status. An inscription from the reign of Gordian found in the complex to Jupiter Optimus Maximus Dolichenus mentions a *municipium Septimium Porolissense* with a '*dec*[*urio*] *ornat*[*us*] *ornamen*[*tis*] *IIII vir*[*alibus*] *col*[*oniae*] *s*[*upra*] *s*[*criptae*]' and two '*sacerdotes d*[*ei*] *I*[*ovi*] *et col*[*oniae*] *s*[*upra*] *s*[*criptae*]' which, if interpreted correctly, refers to a *colonia Porolissensis* (Gudea and

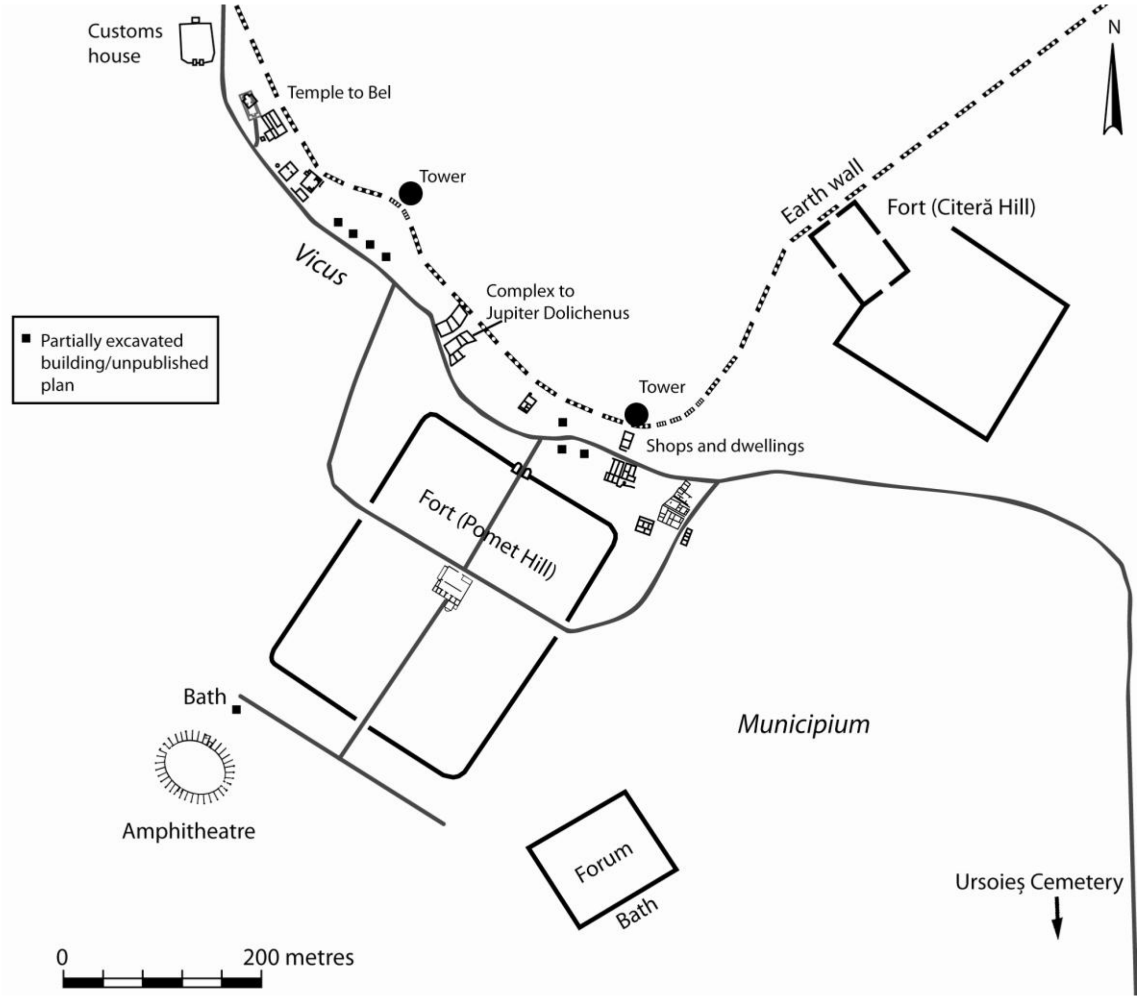


Figure 4.8: Layout of Porolissum. After Tamba 2009: Fig. 25. Earth wall precedes buildings in the *vicus*.

Tamba 2001: 25, 65-71). Another inscription from the site mentioning a *decurio col*[*onia*] is dated to AD 241/244 (Gudea and Tamba 2001: 66). Gudea and Tamba (2001: 65-71) argue the military *vicus* to the northeast of the fort was granted *municipium* status while the former *municipium* to the southeast of the fort was granted *colonia* status, in a development similar to Apulum. However, the two inscriptions remain the only evidence for this, and the archaeological evidence is not convincing. Nowhere do these inscriptions explicitly mention a *colonia Porolissensis*, and the entire theory rests on the interpretation of *supra scriptae*. Unlike known conurbations of this

type, there is no distinct geographical feature, such as a river, in the layout of the urban area that might serve to delineate these two municipal districts.

Table 4.5: Chronology of urban development at Porolissum based on excavations in the forum area (De Sena 2009), the auxiliary fort (Gudea 1989; 1996) and associated *vicus* (Tamba 2008).

Phase	Description	Chronology
Timber I	First timber phase of auxiliary fort located in area of later forum; first timber phase of fort on higher part of Pomet Hill; wooden amphitheatre constructed	Trajan to Antoninus Pius
Stone I	Sparse stone structures in the forum area on a different orientation than anterior and posterior phases; amphitheatre constructed in stone; second timber auxiliary fort constructed in different location on Pomet Hill	Between Antoninus Pius and Septimius Severus
Stone II	Forum courtyard and buildings are constructed in stone; at some point in this phase a bath complex is installed at the southeast end of the forum; stone phase of auxiliary fort constructed	Septimius Severus/Caracalla to the mid-3rd century
Stone III	Porticus of forum is sealed in some parts; water basins are constructed in basilica; alterations to bath complex; ditch dug around forum area, subsequently filled in with stone; auxiliary fort and parts of *vicus* fall into disuse	Late Roman/post-Roman

Not enough information is known about the intramural and extramural sizes of the towns in Roman Dacia, but by calculating the spatial area in GIS of the extent of finds and features in the vicinity reasonable estimates have been made (Table 4.6). Only for Ulpia Traiana and Aurelia Apulensis are both of these sizes known, but these are the most important urban centres for all of Dacia. Intramural area and status are not indicators as to how large any of the cities will be across Roman Dacia. If we except *municipium Septimium Apulense* since it is part of a larger conurbation at Apulum, Napoca and Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa have the smallest intramural area. This implies that they were probably conceived of as smaller towns than the others. They both share the trait of early development reflected through official status grants (Ulpia Traiana was a *colonia deducta* while Napoca was granted *colonia* status earlier than any other town save perhaps Apulum) and the absence of any earlier military bases (Diaconescu 2004: 89-103). The military bases which became urban centres matured

much later. Even so, the legionary presence at Potaissa appears to have stimulated rapid growth and expansion.

Table 4.6: Towns in Roman Dacia and estimated areas based on extent of archaeological features.

Region	Town	Intramural (ha)	Total (ha)	Reference
Northwest Transylvania	Potaissa	Unknown	Over 100	Bărbulescu 1987
	Porolissum	Unknown	60	Gudea and Tamba 2000
	Napoca	25	50	Voişian *et al.* 2000
Other areas of Roman Dacia	Romula	Unknown	100	Tătulea 1994
	Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa	22.5 (Trajanic) 32 (Hadrianic)	75-100	Diaconescu 2004
	Apulum I (Aurelia)	58	75-80	Diaconescu 2004
	Drobeta	50	Unknown	Benea 1977
	Apulum II (Septimium)	*c.* 40	Unknown	Diaconescu 2004

Two considerations were factors in the choice of location for the towns: accessibility and resources. Napoca is located at the junction of two roads alongside a major river. Potaissa is located in a central location from which roads lead north to Napoca, west to the Eastern Carpathians or south to Apulum. Accessibility to urban areas on foot is also very simple since they are both in flat river valleys and both contain rich alluvium which was good for cultivation. Very important in the establishment of Potaissa was the nearby salt mine which was heavily exploited in numerous periods, as well as the quarries of Cheile Turzii and Sănduleşti to the west where building stone was exploited for the town; and at Napoca there were quarries of good quality limestone for building (see 4.5).

In comparison, at Porolissum accessibility is more restricted by the varied topography and the fact that there are no major rivers within reasonable distance. Its importance lay in the fact that it lay in the most important means of access between the two sides of the Meseş Mountains. This follows the strategy of control maintained by the hillforts of the Late Iron Age. By holding this point of access, Porolissum was more than able to compensate for the lack of good quality land for cultivation. It had access to

the rich area of the Zalău River just beyond the frontier. In addition, the fact that no large nucleated centres developed at any of the other forts in the area of the Meseş *limes*, even at the massive fort of Romita, suggests that Porolissum drew resources from a substantial territory and probably acted as an important distribution centre for a large part of the entire frontier system. Although military strategy played an important role in Porolissum's location, it was part of planned system which encompassed practical considerations.

4.2.1. The end of towns

The fate of these towns has been the subject of much speculation (Table 4.7). Until recently, sporadic finds at Porolissum have for some time been the only evidence for occupation of the area after the departure of Roman administration and the armies (Gudea 1979; 1986; Matei 1979a: 478-479; Diaconescu 1999: 210). Urban burials have contributed to the discussion as well, but the lack of burial inventories makes their exact chronological relationship to towns difficult to discern. At least one burial monument at the Ursoieş cemetery south of the town was probably of a late Roman/post-Roman date based on the fact that it was set on a platform constructed of re-used hypocaust bricks (Gudea *et al.* 2008: 153). More recently, studies of coins and pottery have revealed more substantial and convincing evidence for post-Roman habitation in the area and some commercial and political relations with the Romans. Post-Roman coin issues are present at Porolissum, though there is a large gap between *c*. AD 262 and 325 (Găzdac and Gudea 2006). The influx in AD 325 is seen as a result of the brief Constantinian reconquest of southern Dacia. Pottery, on the other hand, does not reveal any significant breakdown in networks, as commercial exchange probably continued with other parts of Dacia and perhaps the Empire via Apulum (De Sena, forthcoming).

Table 4.7: Urban building activity in the late Roman/post-Roman period

Town	Location	Activity	Reference
Napoca	Matei Corvin Street	Wall constructed abutting older standing wall	Diaconescu 2004
	Piaţa Unirii	Repaired colonnade	Alicu *et al.* 1994
Porolissum	Basilica	Interior area converted into three adjacent water basins	Unpublished
	Forum perimeter	Ditches dug around forum	Unpublished
	Forum colonnade	Colonnade sealed in some places	Unpublished
	Northeast edge of courtyard	Walls braced with column fragments; apsidal structure built or repaired with post-built support on interior	Unpublished
	Temple of Bel	Converted into Christian church	Gudea 2002

One of the key features in the debate about post-Roman continuity at Porolissum is a building interpreted as a Christian church (Gudea 2002). The Roman building designated N2, located on the ‘sanctuary terrace’ was constructed in the second century as a temple most likely dedicated to Liber Pater (Gudea *et al.* 1982). Originally it was a small *opus incertum* structure with an apse, the structure was completely altered at the end of the second century or the beginning of the third, incorporating only the apse of the former building. Its orientation was changed to southeast-northwest, and its dimensions were expanded. In the third century, the main interior part of the temple was compartmentalised, some of the area seeming to fall into disuse, and a small room was added to the southeast. On the basis of an inscription recovered in 1937, the structure is interpreted as a temple to Bel in the second and third phases (Chirilă *et al.* 1980: 92-85; Gudea 1986: 102-104; Alicu-Rusu 2000: 74-77; Tamba 2008: 347). A powerful fire which destroyed the final phase of the temple also left enough of it to utilise once again in the post-Roman period. Repairs to the walls of the last Roman phase incorporate monuments and building stone from other structures which had gone out of use. Although more precise chronology is lacking it is fairly certain that it was utilised as a Christian church based on the presence of Christian artefacts in the area. The church may have been built as early as the fourth century (Gudea 2002), although most stone

churches in Romania and Hungary are attributed to the period between the fifth and the seventh centuries (*e.g.*, Visy 2003: 305-306).

Excavations of Porolissum's forum have revealed the best evidence so far for the post-Roman fate of the city. Ditches cutting into the Roman surface around the edges of the forum were detected in the first years of excavation. Also belonging to this phase are modifications to the interior of the forum. First, spaces between the columns in segments of the third phase colonnade surrounding the courtyard were sealed in situ by walls of crude masonry consisting of thick layers of mortar bonding a heterogeneous mix of recycled building materials. A series of three water basins constructed with this same type of masonry were later installed in the building interpreted as the basilica. In the southwest corner, a large apsidal structure was uncovered which was superimposed on a number of other phases which are more similar to other rectangular structures which are found to the northwest of the forum courtyard. Within it were found several postholes probably supporting a roof. At the entrance was a large rectangular stone slab from a monument which was re-used as a threshold. Further to the north, several fragments of columns in white limestone and sandstone were found lining the contours of a wall which extended northward from the courtyard. Traces of the mortar used to hold the columns in place were found on the surface of the floor, underneath stone rubble from the collapse of the buildings. An even later narrow ditch ran parallel to this repair, cutting through the stone rubble which covered the living surface. These building activities do not indicate a few individual left behind by the Romans, but a thriving post-Roman community. While the fort and adjacent *vicus* have yielded no certain evidence for late third or fourth century activity, the *municipium* remained an important centre for maintaining certain Roman life-ways for at least a century after the departure of the armies.

The case for continuity at Potaissa has rested on small finds. A number of coins have been recovered from within the fort which date between the reigns of Aurelian and Constantine I; and outside the fort, in the area of the modern town, ancient coins have been recovered issued as late as Valentinian I (Crişan *et al.* 1992: 397; Horedt 1982: 64). In addition to late third and fourth century pottery is an inscribed onyx gem depicting Christ as the Good Shepherd and the inscription IXθYC (Bărbulescu 1980: 176-178; Protase 1966: 150). Burials in the Roman cemeteries contribute much more heavily to this discussion than at Porolissum (see 5.1). Roman cemeteries to the south and west were still being utilised in the late third and fourth centuries, and only later do burials begin to appear outside of these areas. Two burials inside the legionary fortress both date to the fifth century.

At Napoca, there is very little archaeological evidence for activity within the city walls past the 280s (Fig. 4.7). A number of coins found outside the city walls and in the area of the modern town include issues of emperors as late as Valentinian II (Chirilă and Chifor 1978); but within the walls there are no coins from any secure context that date to after Carinus (AD 285); nor have any early Christian artefacts been recovered here. A recent comprehensive study of Roman pottery from these rescue excavations has shown that third century pottery, imported and locally produced, is poorly represented (Rusu-Bolindeţ 2007). This may be a more general problem with the archaeological contexts of earlier excavations, but it also may indicate that Napoca was already facing depopulation by the third century. In a secondary deposit in the foundations of a medieval cellar along Kogălniceanu Street, a limestone column base was found (Hica-Cîmpeanu 1977: 233). This base was inscribed with the letter D, most likely for DM (*Dis Manibus*), indicating habitation after some buildings had fallen into disuse.

Rescue excavations in the southeast area of Piaţa Unirii revealed two parallel walls, loosely constructed of stone and mortar (Alicu *et al.* 1995). A column capital was found in the area, and this was interpreted as a porticus from a very late Roman phase, since ceramics datable to the fourth to sixth centuries were discovered in the area. However, a medieval building was located in the immediate area, and so the dating is uncertain. Excavations in the area have also revealed late fireplaces above a thick debris layer and associated with walls that were still standing; but the pottery assemblage here appears to date to the sixth century (Diaconescu 2004: 134). The discovery inside the old city at Matei Corvin Street of a wall made of re-used faced building stone abutting and partially covering an older wall and what is interpreted as a late Roman hypocaust canal may well be some of the only evidence for occupation of the intramural area in the post-Roman period, but could also date to much later (Marcu-Istrate *et al.* 2002). Thus, there is no evidence for any substantial settlement in the Roman town of Napoca after the withdrawal of Roman administration.

4.2.2. Contextualising towns

Urban archaeology suggests regional and micro-regional variation in the origins, development, forms and functions which reveal more fundamental differences in the social composition. The towns had an extraordinary amount of ethnic diversity due to massive colonisation, attested epigraphically and archaeologically; so much so, in fact, that the Dacian presence is barely felt. At Napoca, the presence of Dacian pottery (both wheelmade and handmade) only comprises about 4.5 per cent of the pottery sample studied by Rusu-Bolindeţ (2008: 120); but another two per cent of the sample consists of seperate Late La Tène forms also found at Emona and Poetovio in Pannonia, indicating the settlement of Norico-Pannonian potters in the early years of colonisation

(Rusu-Bolindeţ 2008: 103-105, 121). At Porolissum Dacian handmade wares comprise 0.9 per cent of the pottery studied within the Porolissum forum to date against the backdrop of a much greater body of evidence for colonists and military personnel from all over the Empire (De Sena, forthcoming). Despite the evidence for substantial pre-Roman settlement at Măgura and Citeră, the Dacians do not appear to have played a significant role in the establishment of Roman towns. Diaconescu (2004: 128) argues that in the western part of the province the Dacians disappeared among the newcomers. This was more severe in the central part of the province than in the northern and southern Hadrianic *municipia* like Napoca. In the rural eastern part of the province, the presence of natives is conspicuous. There is clearly a difference between east and west, but to investigate this theory we must also look to broader settlement patterns which provided the context for the disposition of these towns.

For almost a century, Napoca was the only *municipium* of Dacia Porolissensis, the primary means for social advancement within the sphere of Roman politics in the entirety of northern Dacia. The *vicus* of Potaissa became important decades after the transfer of the legion to the settlement. At Porolissum, development seems to have taken a slower course, with rapid promotion(s) in the third century. The grant of *municipium* status to these towns was more of a reward for military service rather than an indication of the town's size, wealth or influence.

Oltean (2007: 175-179), following Bintliff (1997), has noted that rural central places (aggregated settlements and villas) cluster within 15 km or so around the largest centres in the Mureş Valley. In the case of Northwest Transylvania, Napoca is the only town that gives any indication of this type of clustering (Fig. 4.9). Villages are not found within 10 km of either location, and villa architecture is quite rare within 15 km of Potaissa and not found within the same area of Porolissum. As discussed

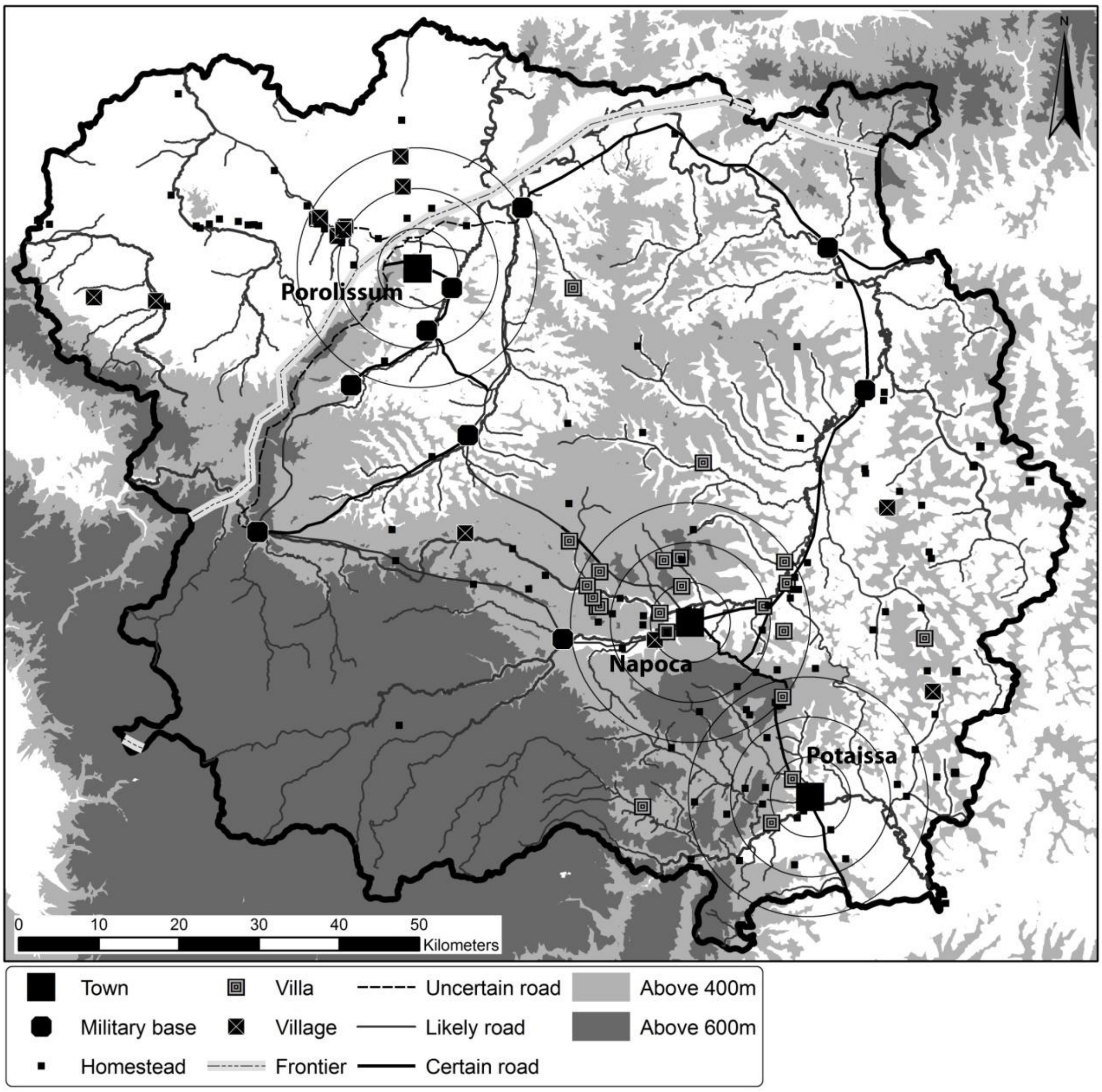


Figure 4.9: Villages and villas in relation to Roman towns (buffers at 5, 10 and 15 km).

above, it was not only the towns themselves which differed in their development, but their surrounding landscapes.

In the post-Roman period, there is evidence for continued use of the urban area of Porolissum and Potaissa; however, at Napoca urban life seems to have ended rather abruptly in the fourth century. The two towns associated with military bases may have lasted longer because they were more integrated with local, non-military inhabitants than at Napoca, where planned, rapid settlement nucleation created an illusion of importance without systematised integration (see 4.3). Napoca was primarily a means of

social advancement by the intrusive population of colonists and military personnel, and as a result the settlement was less resilient in the wake of the withdrawal than Porolissum and Potaissa, where the lives of the soldiers were intimately connected with local populations outside the immediate area of the settlement (in the case of Porolissum, Free Dacians from which crops and animals were obtained; and in the case of Potaissa, skilled salt miners). Along with obvious resources, it was these post-Roman population centres rather than direct association with Roman authority that attracted Goths and/or Gepids in the fifth century. This comparison makes a very good case for looking to military bases rather than urban centres as the primary points of contact between intrusive and local communities.

4.3. Military bases and fortified structures

The Romanian term for most Roman fortifications, *castru*, deriving from the Latin *castrum*, translates to 'camp'. This is used to describe both constructions that were occupied for a brief time on campaign and those built for the long term. This term also obscures the fact that the extra-mural area of a fort was an integral part of the life of the unit. A 'support train' of non-combatants always accompanied the provincial army right from the start of a province, actively involved in life both inside and outside the walls of the fort (James 2001: 80). In the context of this analysis, the forts and fortresses are seen as part of a larger settlement, the military base (Fig. 4.10). Investigations have shown that these associated settlements were laid out at the same time as the forts, and thus were integral to the garrison settlement from the beginning (Sommer 1984: 6-13; 1999a: 175-177). With few exceptions, the locations of these settlements of the major forts in Dacia Porolissensis have been found through surface finds and rescue excavations. In

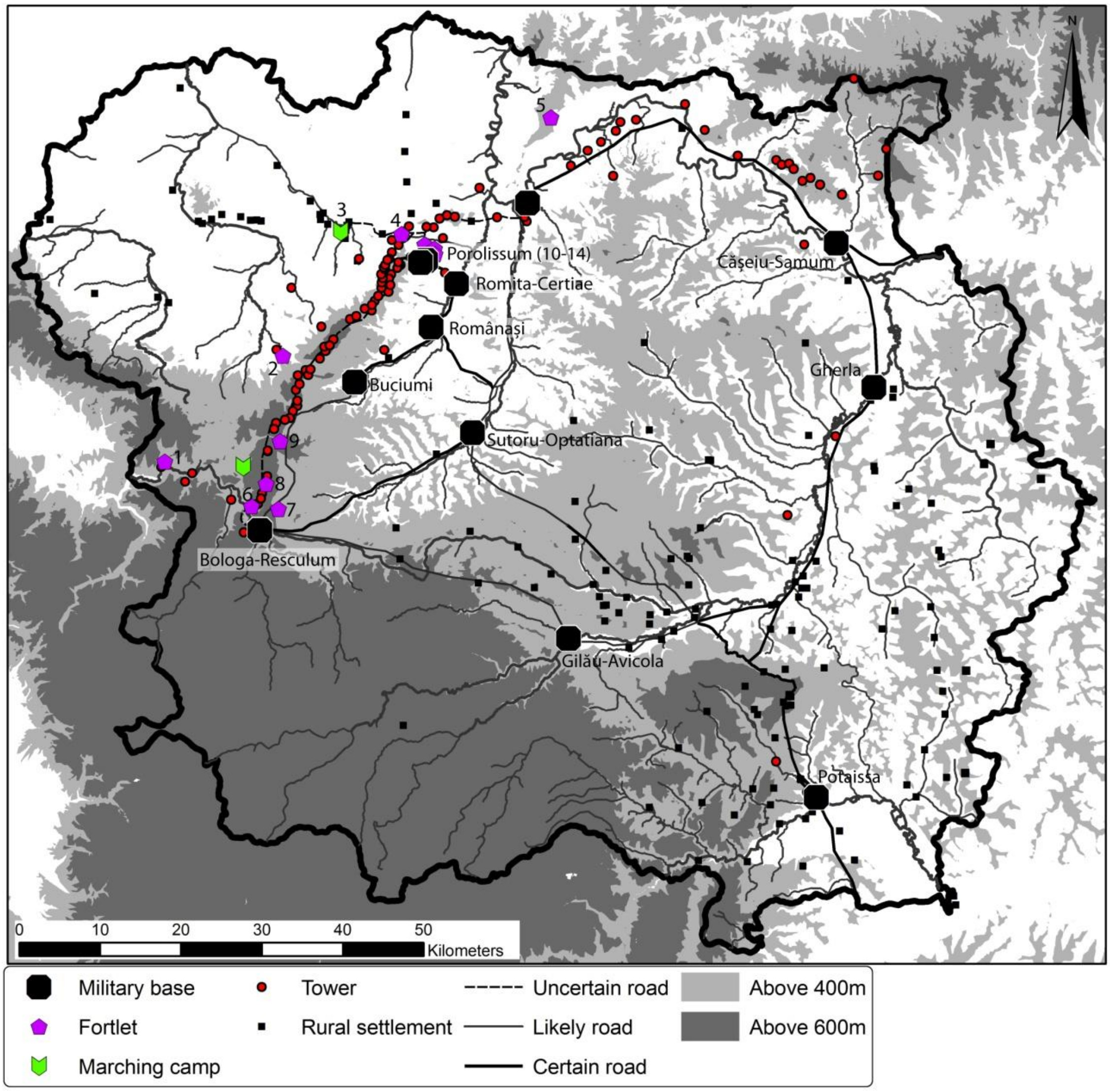


Figure 4.10: Roman military bases. Numbered sites correspond to Table 4.12 and in-text references.

Northwest Transylvania, only the *vici* of Porolissum and Căşeiu-Samum have been subjected to long-term systematic excavations.

The fortified space of the bases is generally divided into categories based on size and function. Following the classification of Frere and St. Joseph (1983), we find 11 forts (garrison-posts occupied by an auxiliary unit or units, usually 1-6 hectares) and one central fortress (permanent base for a legion, about 20 ha or more). All of the forts had associated settlements; however, the lack of investigations outside their fortified areas has not clarified their relationship to the broader landscape (or even some of their

locations!). Though there are two forts at Porolissum, it should be considered as a single unit because they shared an associated settlement. Therefore, although there are 12 large fortified structures, there are 11 military bases. As with towns, variable social compositions at these settlements led to very different paths of development.

With the exception of Gherla, Potaissa and Sutoru-Optatiana, there is evidence at all of the forts that indicates they were laid out in or around AD 106 as bases of operation during or immediately after the wars in the operations to secure the province (Table 4.8). With the exception of Potaissa, excavations of all forts in Northwest Transylvania have uncovered some evidence for a timber phase. Although the number of military bases did not change drastically over the Roman occupation, their roles did. This is reflected in the changes to the sizes of the forts, the abandonment of others (Citeră and the possible fort in the area of the later forum at Porolissum) and the movement of troops attested epigraphically.

The sizes of the forts are important to note because they indicate which areas were of strategic importance in the immediate post-conquest phase (Table 4.8). Romita was the single largest fort in the conquest phase of the occupation. From here the *cohors VI Thracum equitata* (and perhaps the *cohors I Augusta Ituraeorum sagittariorum*) could secure the area near the Meseş Mountains and launch operations into Free Dacia. Although the *cohors I Augusta Ituraeorum sagittariorum* may have been stationed elsewhere at Porolissum, it had a hand in the construction of the timber phase of the fort and thus may have been stationed here for a while as well. Roman-style tiles and ovens recorded at the hillfort of Măgura Moigradului make sense if we imagine units setting out from here to scout the area (Gudea *et al.* 1986).

The medium to large forts along the Meseş Mountains (Porolissum, Romita, Bologa, Buciumi, Românăşi and Tihău), all in close proximity, are indicative of the

number of personnel needed to man the *limes* system. Besides manning towers and small fortlets, troops spent their time dispersed along the *limes* and engaged in other military activities. Gilău may have been one of the smallest due to its proximity to Napoca and its rather late post-conquest origins, but it was expanded to a standard size of around three hectares in its stone phase.

Table 4.8: Area of forts in and fortresses in Northwest Transylvania (ha)

Location	Timber		Stone	Reference
	Conquest	Post-Conquest		
Bologa (Resculum)	2.00	2.94	2.83	Gudea 1968
Buciumi	2.05	2.05	2.24	Gudea 1997a
Căşeiu (Samum)	2.70	2.70	2.72	Isac 2003
Gherla	?	?	2.74	Protase *et al.* 2008
Gilău (Avicola)		1.51	2.94	Isac 1997
Porolissum-Citera		0.57	0.67	Gudea 1989
Porolissum-Pomet		6.64	6.90	Gudea 1997d
Potaissa			23.37	Bărbulescu 1994b
Românăşi (Largiana)	1.85	1.85	2.06	Tamba 1997
Romita (Certiae)	4.21	4.21	4.21	Matei and Bajusz 1997
Sutoru (Optatiana)	?	?	?	Ilieş *et al.* 2007
Tihău	1.86	1.86	1.86	Bennett 2006

Table 4.9: Agricultural territory of military bases

Location	Area (ha)
Potaissa (early phase)	5290
Căşeiu-Samum	4763
Gherla	4562
Tihău	4442
Gilău	4335
Romita-Certiae	4153
Sutoru-Optatiana	3977
Buciumi	3875
Românași-Largiana	3836
Bologa-Resculum	3369
Porolissum	3026
Average	4148

Accessibility was an important feature of military settlements in terms of both strategy and simple logistics (Table 4.9). The interior line comprising Căşeiu, Gherla and Potaissa also show similar patterns of accessibility. As with hillforts, this patterning implies a certain amount of regional settlement hierarchy, though it is not as distinctive

as the Late Iron Age. The interior cordon (Potaissa, Gherla, Gilău) was meant to be accessible since the troops needed to move rapidly. On the exterior cordon along the Meseş Mountains, however, where settlement thinned out, more concern was shown for positions of strategic and symbolic importance. From the hills on which the forts were situated, garrisons could exert control over large territories via dispersed units stationed at towers or fortlets; yet they were situated in places where there was an active concern for keeping access restricted and thus easily controlled. The low variability of the accessibility indicates a concern with the localised spatial dominance rather than regional, though Porolissum does fall on the lower end of this spectrum. This fact in conjunction with its size and location indicate that it does belong at the top of the political, social and economic end of the hierarchy for this area.

We can make rational minimum estimates of the territory needed to feed the soldiers, their slaves and their animals when the forts were first laid out and when they were constructed in stone. The initial construction of the fort is important because it was at that point when the military was finding its footing in the new province. The construction of stone forts communicates some measure of permanence for the unit which constructed it and sustainability for the system as a whole. There is a general agreement over which units were present in the early stages of the forts based on military diplomas and inscriptions (Gudea 1997a). Tables 4.10 and 4.11 show the results of using this information alongside Roth's (1998) estimations for the minimum numbers of soldiers, pack-animals, horses and slaves associated with each unit and the formulae used by Kreuz (1995) to determine minimum measures of agricultural consumption for Roman units. This is not a measure of autarky, but rather the scale on which the soldiers needed to interact with the broader supply routes or social networks.

Table 4.10: Estimate of minimum agricultural terrain for troops stationed in the earliest phases of forts. After the work of Kreuz (1995) and Roth (1998).

Fort	Units	Ha for cereal	Ha for hay	Ha for barley	Total
Bologa-Resculum	Cohors I Ulpia Brittonum miliaria equitata	228.13	854.10	638.75	1720.98
Buciumi	Cohors I Augusta Ituraeorum sagittariorum	109.50	175.20	146.00	430.70
Căşeiu-Samum	Cohors II Britannica miliaria	228.13	350.40	292.00	870.53
Gherla	Ala II Pannoniarum veterana	116.80	1048.65	718.14	1883.58
Gilău	Cohors I Pannoniarum equitata veterana	136.88	427.05	319.38	883.30
Porolissum	Legio XIII Gemina vexillatio Cohors I Ulpia Brittonum miliaria equitata Cohors V Lingonum quingenaria Cohors VI Thracum equitata Cohors I Hispanorum quingenaria equitata	912.50	2244.75	1669.88	4827.13
Românaşi-Largiana	Cohors I Hispanorum quingenaria	109.50	175.20	146.00	430.70
Romita-Certiae	Cohors VI Thracum equitata Cohors I Augusta Ituraeorum sagittariorum (?)	136.88	427.05	319.38	883.30
Sutor-Optatiana	Numerus Maurorum Optatiensium	45.63	0.00	0.00	45.63
Tihău	Legio XIII Gemina vexillatio	114.06	175.20	146.00	435.26
Turda-Potaissa	Legio V Macedonica	1095.00	1533.00	1277.50	3905.50

Table 4.11: Estimate of minimum agricultural terrain devoted to troops stationed at the forts when the stone phase was built. After work of Kreuz (1995) and Roth (1998).

Fort	Units	Ha for cereal	Ha for hay	Ha for barley	Total
Bologa-Resculum	Cohors II Hispanorum scutata Cyrenaica equitata Cohors I Aelia Gaesatorum miliaria	365.00	777.45	611.38	1753.83
Buciumi	Cohors II Nervia Brittonum miliaria	228.13	350.40	292.00	870.53
Căşeiu-Samum	Cohors I Britannica milliaria equitata	237.25	854.10	638.75	1730.10
Gherla	Ala II Pannoniorum veterana	116.80	1048.65	718.14	1883.58
Gilău	Ala Siliana	116.80	1048.65	718.14	1883.58
Porolissum	Cohors I Ulpia Brittonum milliaria equitata Cohors V Lingonum quingenaria Numerus Palmyrenorum	392.38	969.08	734.56	2096.01
Românaşi-Largiana	Cohors I Hispanorum quingenaria	109.50	175.20	146.00	430.70
Romita-Certiae	Cohors II Britannica miliaria	228.13	350.40	292.00	870.53
Sutor-Optatiana	Numerus Maurorum Optatiensium	45.63	0.00	0.00	45.63
Tihău	Cohors I Cannanefatium	109.50	175.20	146.00	430.70
Turda-Potaissa	Legio V Macedonica	1095.00	1533.00	1277.50	3905.50

In the case of the Meseş *limes* area, social networks were probably much more important because of the significant distance from Napoca, which was the closest source of significant agricultural production inside the Empire. If we take this to be true, the most striking observation of the initial phase of the military bases is the massive strain placed upon the Meseş Gate area by the units stationed at Porolissum. In the early years of the occupation this was even more important since it meant that troops were spending much more time close to the base rather than at newly constructed fortlets and the system of watchtowers. While the units were focusing their labour on constructing the features which would later become this *limes* system, they were consuming massive proportions of food which had to be drawn from provincial supply networks such as Napoca, but increasingly the local agricultural territory of the bases and more distant social networks from across the *limes* (see 6.1).

Potaissa comes next in the order, but as it was constructed much later (AD 168) and directly in stone to house the *legio V Macedonica* it presents a very different case. Gherla and Bologa-Resculum also required quite a large area for cultivation to meet the needs of their units, in this case because they both needed fodder for horses. Between Bologa and the Meseş Gate, however, no forts created such a demand on the landscape as Porolissum. Another important point is the need for large amounts of fodder and, implicitly, pasture for the cavalry unit stationed at Gherla, the single *ala* in the initial phase of conquest. Situated some distance away from other forts, fortlets or even towers, the flat area near Someşul Mic made for excellent pasture. Strategically, the unit could reinforce the northern *limes* from here.

By the time of Septimius Severus, all of the existing forts were constructed in stone. Although the army was no less of a permanent feature of the landscape than before, stone construction is usually an indication that a unit intends to become a

permanent local fixture. As a result of the Marcomannic Wars, larger units were stationed at a number of forts. Even though Porolissum's units were reduced with consolidation into a single fort on Pomet, the units along the Meseş *limes* continued to be a drain on local resources. Also notable is the garrison of another ala unit at Gilău, west of Napoca, which replaced the British *cohors equitata*, creating more need for barley and hay in this area. Like Gherla, this fort is a significant distance away from other places to deploy troops. In this case, the troops could be deployed to protect the town of Napoca if need dictated.

The contrast of these figures with the agricultural territories (*cf.* Table 4.9) reveals some interesting patterns. Despite the fact that Porolissum and Bologa created the largest demand on the landscape in the initial phases of occupation, they are located in areas with some of the most inaccessible terrains. Porolissum especially could not rely on its agricultural territory to supply even 2/3 of its troops, let alone its civilian tail. The important role of these two forts on the Meseş *limes* continued in the third century, although their forms and units had gone through significant changes. At the other end of the spectrum, Potaissa and the other forts of the interior cordon (with the exception of Căşeiu-Samum on the northern part of the *limes*) occupied locations where the area within a one-hour walking distance easily could encompass the land needed to feed the army, its slaves and its animals. At Potaissa, this was a significant amount more (37 per cent) than was needed for the bare minimum, which should have allowed for the growth and development of a substantial associated settlement. Potaissa's growth was not solely determined by its location, but it certainly was a factor. In contrast, substantial settlements are not detected near the forts along the Meseş *limes* with the exception of Porolissum; and even there, its growth was slow compared to Potaissa and Napoca. This

analysis shows that Porolissum, along with other bases along the Meseş *limes* were less sustainable for a civilian population.

The layout of the forts and fortresses of Roman Dacia has already been covered in depth by a number of scholars (*cf*. Isac 1999). Here we are concerned with the layout of the entire military base including all associated settlement. Tamba (2001), who has been involved in the excavations of the *vicus* at Porolissum, has identified three topographical patterns in the locations of *vici* in Dacia Porolissensis (Fig. 4.11):

- On high level plateaux at the confluence of rivers: Gilău, Bologa, Buciumi Românaşi and Tihău
- On high plateaux in the area of a passage: Porolissum
- On flat river bank: Romita and Căşeiu-Samum

Porolissum stands out as the only military base not in immediate proximity to a river. Considering that rivers were so important for moving commercial goods and military provisions, this is an exceptional for the location of the entire settlement. Local contacts were necessary for providing for the significant military and non-combatant presence there with enough food.

Especially important are the military bases of Gilău and Căşeiu-Samum. Both of these locations are close to Roman bridges (across Someşul Mic in the case of Gilău and across the Someş in the case of Căşeiu-Samum). It has been suggested that in the latter case, a *statio* of the consular *beneficarius* was set up in front of the bridge, acting as a customs office (Isac 2003: 56). We might imagine a small garrison also posted at the bridge at Napoca in the earliest phase of the province, facilitated by the support of a nearby fort.

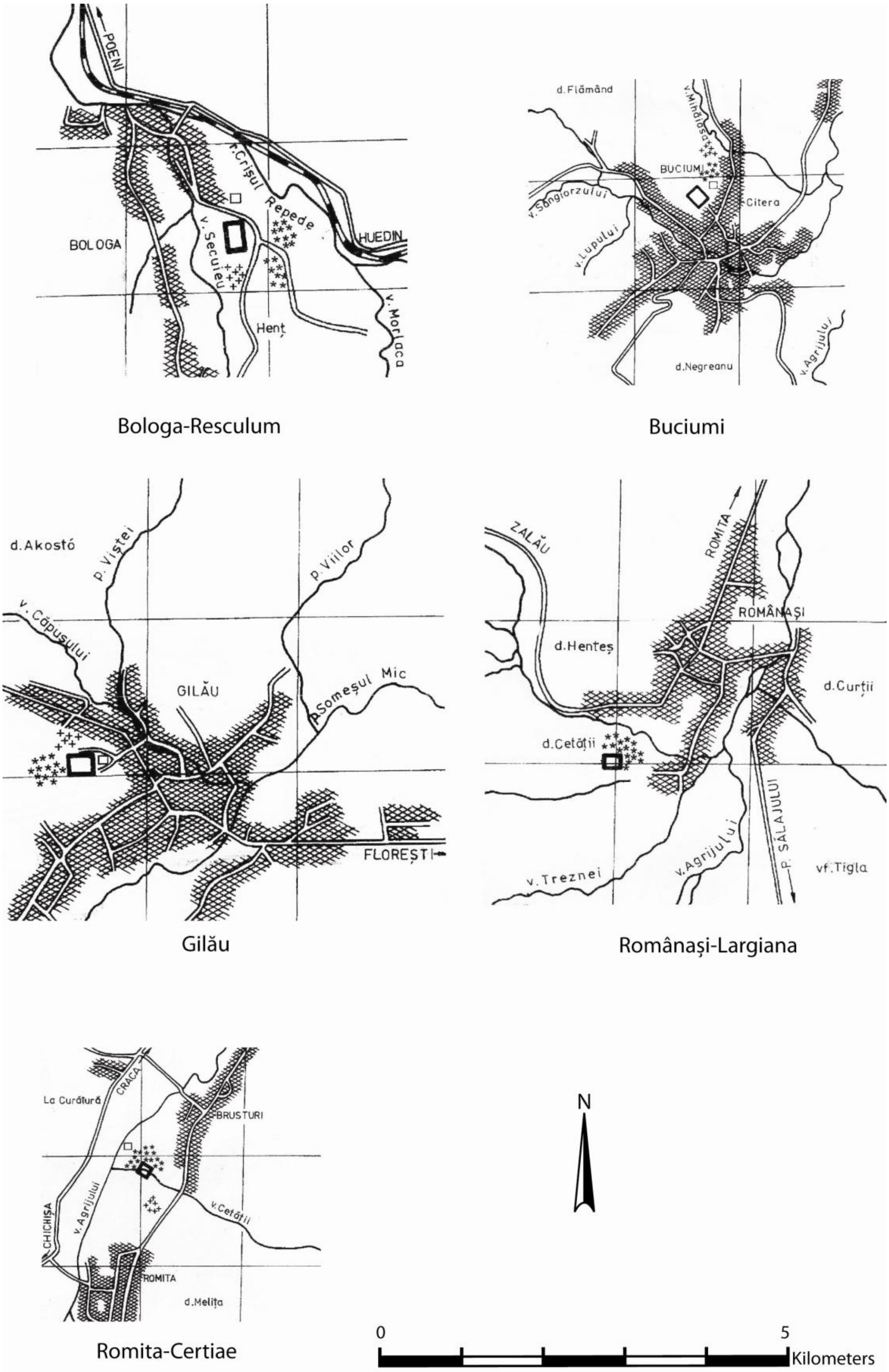


Figure 4.11: Layout of military bases based on surface finds. Dark rectangle = fort; stars = surface scatter; crosses = funerary artefacts; light rectangle = bath complex; hatching = modern village. After Tamba 2001.

Although military *vici* have been mapped with good results in central Transylvania (Oltean 2007), the soils with high clay content in this region do not reveal their subterranean structures so readily. Very little is known about the layout and extent of the military *vici* except at Căşeiu and Porolissum. The early military *vicus* at Porolissum looks to be of tangent-type, wherein the main part is situated along the major road bypassing the fort (Fig. 4.8; see Sommer 1999b for *vicus* typology). After passing through a militarised zone of towers and fortifications, a foreign visitor entered the base of Porolissum from the north, passing first by a customs house. This was followed by a religious complex on the opposite side of the road (the 'sanctuary terrace', N1-N7), and then by shops, one associated with a religious complex to Jupiter Optimus Maximus Dolichenus (LM1S). The set of experiences facilitated by the layout of the *vicus* shows that Porolissum was not simply planned as a military settlement, but with a view towards controlling and facilitating commerce between inhabitants of the town and the population beyond the frontier from the earliest stages. Dwellings appear after the shops in the form of *Streifenhäuser*, long thin multi-room buildings oriented toward the road which are common at military *vici*, as the road curves around the fort to the south and into what would later be the *municipium* (Tamba 2008). The aerial survey of the Mureş Valley (Oltean 2007: 150-164) shows the *vici* at Micia and Războieni to have similar *Streifenhaus*-type structures, oriented toward the road past the fort with occasional gaps like the structures at Porolissum. On the opposite side of the fort was an amphitheatre, constructed in timber between AD 110 and 157, and subsequently in stone in 157 (Gudea *et al.* 1988: 154-156; Gudea *et al.* 1992: 148-150; Tamba 2008: 52-53).

The *vicus* at Căşeiu is still under investigation and no good plans have been published, although a number of structures have been found along the road approaching

the *porta principalis dextra*. Older excavations at Bologa show activity focused to the east of the fort along the road, arguing strongly again for a tangent-type layout as at Porolissum, which runs alongside the fort (Gudea 1997b: 50-51; Tamba 2001: 261-262). A first phase of timber structures with adobe bricks is associated with the *cohors II Britannica milliaria*. A second phase is associated with the *cohors I Brittanica milliaria* which was stationed there shortly afterward in the reign of Hadrian. At this point streets were laid out and the structures were aligned on a similar axis.

For other layouts we are at the mercy of chance finds and artefact scatters. Tamba (2001; 2008: 377-388) has made some useful progress in assessing their locations. At Bologa and Buciumi, the main part of the vicus appears to have been located on the opposite side of the fort from the baths (Gudea 1997: 52-54). Evidence for settlement near the forts at Bologa Buciumi, and Românaşi is concentrated at the corner of the forts. Alternatively, at Romita, the settlement seems to have circled all the way around the fort, where on one side a bath is suspected.

A number of different architectural techniques are used within the military *vici*, although *opus incertum* masonry tends to be most frequently recorded because of the durability of the materials. All of the stone forts were constructed in this technique. This however masks a great variety of construction techniques and plans outside of the fort. Ample surface finds recorded at these settlements attest that most of the buildings were faced with bricks and covered with roof tiles. At Căşeiu the first phase of the fort and its *vicus* appears to have been constructed with simple post-built timber structures; but in its second phase the timber structures are combined with dry clay. Isac (2003: 21) sees this as a response to heavy rainfall, but we have already noted that ancient climatic conditions are difficult to determine. There is also evidence for vernacular semi-sunken houses utilising daub for walls at the *vici* of both Căşeiu and Bologa, co-existing with

rectangular timber buildings (Isac *et al.* 2008; 2009; Gudea 1997). At Căşeiu bricks have been found in the interior of these structures, indicating perhaps consolidation of the foundation of the structures.

At Porolissum, the structures can be categorised by construction technique and by plan. Four methods of construction were utilised. Post-built structures, sometimes faced with daub and some which may have been semi-sunken (LM1, LM3, L7) are associated with the earliest phase of the settlement. Burnt layers underneath the stone phases of the building are interpreted as evidence for this phase (*e.g.*, Tamba 2008: 120). Other wooden structures from later phases utilised unfired bricks (L7). Stone buildings were constructed in *opus incertum* or *opus mixtum*. Tamba (2008: 57-59) divides the plans of the buildings into two categories: rectangular buildings with multiple rooms (phase I of OL6, L3, L4, LM3) and narrow buildings with an atrium and colonnade (phase II of OL6, L5, L7, phases II and III of LM3). Buildings of the latter type are usually later.

Some finds indicate that some of the smaller military *vici* were still in use in the post-Roman period. A gnostic amulet was found at Căşeiu-Samum which is most likely from the late third century AD (Isac 2004). Sondages near to Sutor-Optatiana indicated ceramics characteristic of the fourth century mixed in with the Roman layers (Ilieş *et al.* 2002). Excavations at Gilău also located a fourth century habitation phase (Isac 1997). The fact in every case late third and fourth century material and Roman period material were mixed together is an indication of small-scale continued habitation after the departure of the armies.

4.3.1. Small military structures

When the boundaries of the Empire were inscribed with towers, earthworks, stone walls and fortified bases in the Roman period, a greater degree of control was exercised over mobility. The *limes* did not comprise only military bases but also smaller fortifications of towers and fortlets and earthworks and stone walls which controlled access through natural passages. The construction and maintenance of these elements and their stationing demanded that a significant number of soldiers be away from Porolissum, Românaşi, Romita, Buciumi, and Bologa at any point in time.

To understand the impact of this organisation we turn to Gudea's (1997) and Ferenczi's (1941; 1959; 1967; 1968; 1971) surveys of the Meseş *limes*. For the following discussion, we adopt the following definitions for individual elements, modified from Gudea (1997: 22), Gichon (1974: 528-541) and Lepper and Frere (1988: 260-261):

- Tower: square or round structures built in stone or wood smaller than 200 m^2, able to house a *contubernium* of ten men
- Fortlet: rectangular fortifications of wood, earth and/or stone larger than 200 m^2, able to house part of an auxiliary unit
- Marching camp: rectangular fortifications of wood and earth occupied by a force on campaign away from a base
- Rampart: long walls of earth or stone, usually preceded by ditches, installed at strategic locations to block access

Towers in Northwest Transylvania are circular or square in shape and ranging from 11 m^2 all the way up to 176 m^2, although most towers fall between 30 and 80 m^2. They are generally at higher elevations on hilltops and knolls which provide good visibility. Based on topography and visibility, Gudea (1997) has identified towers constructed in the Roman period as observation towers, signal towers or towers for both. This classification follows a standard typology outlined by Gichon (1974). To these we must also add a small number of other towers based around forts and

communication routes within the province which are traditionally interpreted as guard towers, supervising movement around major fortifications or settlements.

Gudea's (1997) classification is generally accepted among Romanian archaeologists, although it is important to consider alternatives. Southern (1990) has noted that 'signal towers' may serve other functions besides signalling, such as illumination of pathways at night; and Donaldson (1988) has suggested that the towers with projecting torches on Trajan's Column (scene I, casts 5 and 6) actually guided ships on the Danube. Although a number of towers fall along the Someş River, a major means of transport between forts and within and without the administrated territory, very few are within a reasonable distance to be of any use as lighthouses. However, we cannot rule out some towers as illuminating elements along the frontier, as both guides in an otherwise dark, tree-covered environment. Their placement was governed by places that people were likely to pass through, not necessarily by lines of sight toward other towers or toward a central fortified structure.

A comparison between tower sizes and shape and interpreted function reveals very little variability across the *limes* as a whole, indicating that function trumped individual or local expressions of identity. Statistical tests for the size and shape of towers reveals only marginal variation without statistical significance (F-test at 5 per cent critical value and Two-sided test). Although the chronological resolution is not refined for the development of the *limes*, there is no indication of variation of shape over time. If there was any architectural differentiation between different functional types of towers, it is undetectable archaeologically. However, spatially there are two trends in the distribution of these towers: larger towers tend to be closer to military bases along the Meseş Mountains; and square towers are a more common feature in the southern end of the mountain range. The first observation supports the idea that the

towers around forts, rather than the forts themselves may have been responsible for receiving signals from a larger viewshed along the mountains. The fact that there are micro-regional differentiations in the shape of the towers for no apparent reason may indicate different building traditions between units.

Less than half (40 per cent) of the towers within the study area had finds recorded in excavation reports (Gudea 1997). Given that the primary means of recovering materials at these towers was either surface collection or narrow sondages, and that there was no particular systematic effort to collect or record the materials, the record is nowhere near detailed enough to say anything definitively about dating or garrisoning. However, some general comments can be made (Table 4.12). First of all, a great majority of the towers for which materials were recorded had roof tiles (*tegulae* and *imbrices*, some of them stamped), suggesting that tile roofing was predominant among the towers on the Meseş *limes*. General animal bones (some of them burnt) and general pottery (and especially tablewares) were also recorded at a majority of the towers, indicating the consumption and disposal of such items at high rates within the towers or in the immediate proximity rather than in some other common area. Whetstones, querns, brooches and knives occur with lesser frequency, but this may be expected based on the methods of recovery. These items are also quite common in the turrets along Hadrian's Wall and may be considered part of a basic set of provision for soldiers who would be away from the main base for several days (Allason-Jones 1988). The presence of coins is not unexpected since soldiers probably carried these on their person. It is also notable that no jewellery, locks, keys, items of a religious nature or nails were recorded at any of the towers, a pattern which also finds resonance in the turrets of Hadrian's Wall (Allason-Jones 1988). The picture created by the limited material signature is one of small, self-sufficient posts garrisoned by groups of soldiers

for longer than a day. These towers appear to have been occupied on a more or less permanent basis, based on the lack of locks and keys, by alternating groups. These groups of soldiers appear to have cooked and ate together, with seemingly limited interaction with civilians, unlike the larger bases. As the line between soldier and civilian activity at military forts becomes increasingly blurred in archaeology (*e.g.* James 2001), these towers appear to have retained a specifically male, soldierly character, a space to maintain the important ties in the community of soldiers (see 7.2 for more on this).

Table 4.12: Small finds recorded at towers along the Meseş *limes*, where finds were recorded (50 out of 126 total). After data from Gudea 1997.

Finds	Number	Percentage of towers with finds
General pottery	44	88%
Roof tiles (*tegulae* and/or *imbrices*)	41	82%
General bone	16	32%
Tablewares (bowls, plates, cups, jugs, pitchers)	15	30%
Whetstones	8	16%
Iron tools	7	14%
Coins	5	10%
Querns	3	6%
Storage jars	3	6%
Brooches	2	4%
Knives	2	4%
Spearheads	2	4%
Lamps	2	4%
Bronze objects	2	4%

Gichon (1974: 530) has estimated that towers with dimensions of at least 5 x 5 m could accommodate an entire *contubernium* of eight men on a more or less permanent basis (as need dictated the use of the tower), since these were similar to the size of barrack blocks in military camps. Smaller towers may have had the same number of men, but possibly exchanged daily. Any estimate at the population stationed in these is conservative based on the fact that for a large proportion of the towers the dimensions are unknown; but this is balanced by the fact that not all of these towers functioned simultaneously. A few of them were constructed in two phases (one of wood and one of

stone), and 24 others only in a wood phase along the whole *limes*, and may represent consolidation of the frontier in the Trajanic and Hadrianic phases. For the towers for which the size is known, 52 are 25 m^2 and larger; and only four are smaller. This would have placed over five hundred troops away from their bases if these towers functioned simultaneously. Admittedly this is a maximum estimate without better evidence for chronological development of the tower system, but what is evident is that even this would not make much of an impact on the total force stationed on the *limes*.

Table 4.13: Roman fortlets in study area. Number corresponds to Fig.4.10.

Fortlet (*burgus*)	Nr	Closest fort	Size (m^2)	Fortifications	Reference
Brebi-La şcoală	11	Porolissum	2427	Ditch and earth rampart	Gudea 1989
Brebi-Roata Dungii	12	Porolissum	3967	Ditch and earth rampart	Gudea 1989
Dâmbul lui Ionaş	10	Porolissum	*c.* 813	Ditch and earth rampart	Gudea 1989
Hodişu-Dosul Turcului	8	Bologa	1200	Ditch and earth rampart	Gudea 1997
Hodişu-Vârful Seşului	7	Bologa	7000	Ditch and earth rampart; stone structure(?)	Gudea 1997
Moigrad-Ferice	13	Porolissum	*c.* 1600	Ditch and earth rampart	Gudea 1989
Negreni-Cetatea Turcilor	1	Bologa	2047/3080	Ditch and and earth rampart; stone structure(?)	Gudea 1997
Poieni-Valea Varadeştilor	6	Bologa	2350	Unknown	Gudea 1997
Poniţa-Poic	9	Bologa	625	Ditch and double earth rampart	Gudea 1997
Soimuseni-La Caramida	5	Tihău	*c.* 900	Ditch and earth rampart	Matei 1979a
Stârciu-Dealul Secului	2	Buciumi	2585	Ditch and earth rampart	Gudea 1997
Vânători-Dealul Cocinilor (uncertain)	14	Porolissum	1296	Ditch and earth rampart	Ferenczi 1967
Zalău-Fântâna Suşigului/ La Strâmtură	4	Porolissum	2750	Ditch and earth rampart; ditch, stone wall, *agger*	Gudea 1997

Fortlets have been identified at a number of places, usually close to larger forts. Most of these are associated with Porolissum and Bologa, the two ends of the Meseş cordon of forts (Table 4.13). They range between 625 to 3967 m^2 in area, usually rectangular with rounded sides. They are fortified by a ditch and *vallum* (and in one case a double *vallum*) or with a ditch, stone wall and agger. These were only stations for personnel, and so no significant settlements developed around them. Not one of these has been extensively excavated and so the interior arrangement of them is unknown. However, quarried stone, mortar and bricks have been found at both Hodişu-Vârful

Seşului and Negreni-Cetatea Turcilor and so we cannot rule out some stone buildings within (Crişan *et al.* 1992: 231, 292-293).

Two marching camps 10 km northwest of the *limes* are known in Zalău (Fig. 10, nr. 3), as well as a number of linear earthworks at strategic points (*clausura*). The camps are both rectangular, fortified by a ditch and earth bank, one covering 69,300 m^2 and the other 68,442 m^2 (Matei *et al.* 2004; Matei and Pop 2005). Modifying Richardson's (2000; 2002) methodology to determine camp size, it is estimated that these could each accommodate approximately 5.3 and 5.2 'notional cohorts' (units of 480 infantry or 240 cavalry), respectively. This value does not figure in space for slaves and pack-animals, which form a substantial part of the army on campaign, and it is likely that the actual number of cohorts housed at each camp was less than five. Small post-holes were identified at the base of the *vallum* in one of the camps, which were interpreted as repairs to hold up the earth wall and prevent erosion, though we cannot exclude other possibilities. Although excavations did not focus on the interior, the *via sagularis* was identified at one of the camps. The fortifications are overlaid by a number of small dwellings dating to the second or third century, so they were most likely associated with operations following the conquest rather than the Marcomannic Wars.

4.3.2. Contextualising military settlements

The military deployment was part of the provincial administrative structure throughout the entirety of Roman Dacia's existence. From the time of the conquest, without any structures of civil governance, it set forth to directly supervise peoples and resources. Diaconescu (2004: 127-128) notes that auxiliary forts replaced the administrative functions of the hillforts, incorporating the territorial units into the province. We see a similar argument in Northwest Transylvania due to the position of

Porolissum in the proximity of Măgura and Citeră. Precisely because of the destruction of hillforts and their territorial authority, the early years of the occupation represents a much more exploratory process. This process is reflected in the temporary post at the hillfort at Măgura; the temporary marching camps in Free Dacia, which may be Trajanic but could also date to the Marcomannic Wars; and possible stations set up at the bridges across the Someş Mic at Napoca and across the Someş at Dej. Although it is certain that Potaissa was located where it was in order to exploit the nearby salt resources, there is no proof of an early garrison settled to supervise it before the Marcomannic Wars, even after several campaigns of excavation. Also, we note that Porolissum was ill-suited to accommodate such a massive population of soldiers, which is probably why the number of troops was scaled back in the re-organisation of the province. In opposition to the idea of the Roman military targeting strategic areas and resources, it must be recognised that in Northwest Transylvania finding these places was a matter of landscape learning. New resources and better transportation networks could not have been located in Roman Dacia over the course of the second century without social networks going far beyond the immediate vicinity of the military bases.

Another distinctive feature of the military in Northwest Transylvania is its distribution of smaller military structures along the Meseş *limes*, a system which emphasised numerous smaller nodes connected by various networks of communication. The main interior bases were more dispersed, and the soldiers more actively involved in other non-military activities at Napoca or the broad territory around Potaissa. This is important from the point of view of supply. The accommodation of a massive new population in the Meseş Mountains required building social networks with the locals rather than relying mainly on the state. This case is supported by the fact that not a single inscription in Northwest Transylvania indicates the presence of *negotiatores*

(traders) or *seviri augustales* (freedmen in the imperial cult frequently involved in trade), whom Whittaker (1994: 106) argues were under contract of the imperial government. This helps contextualise Dacian pottery in military contexts where it is likely that it was the result of interaction with the rural, Dacian population, although this was most likely framed in terms of expropriation of goods and people (*e.g.*, widows of slaughtered Dacians or slaves).

4.4. Rural settlement

Rural settlement in Northwest Transylvania is merely taken to mean all settlements which are not hillforts, towns or military settlements. This includes villages and individual homesteads in all periods, the latter of which can be further subdivided into villas and small homesteads in the Roman period. Although preventive archaeology has revealed detailed information about a number of rural settlements in recent years, especially around modern Zalău, a significant constraint on interpretation is the fact that so many of these are only known from surface finds.

In assessing rural settlement from such evidence, three categories were deemed important and were able to be reconciled with the evidence: architectural elaboration, extent, and continuity. Extent and continuity/discontinuity are useful indicators for settlement nucleation and dispersal, some of the key themes in the historical narrative of the Daco-Roman paradigm. Of these, extent was the most problematic since it was rarely noted in publications. Nevertheless, it could occasionally be determined from published plans and aerial photographs if it is not recorded. Even so, only a minority of all rural settlements (35 per cent) in this analysis had enough data to reasonably estimate the size of the settlement. Architectural elaboration was only able to be applied

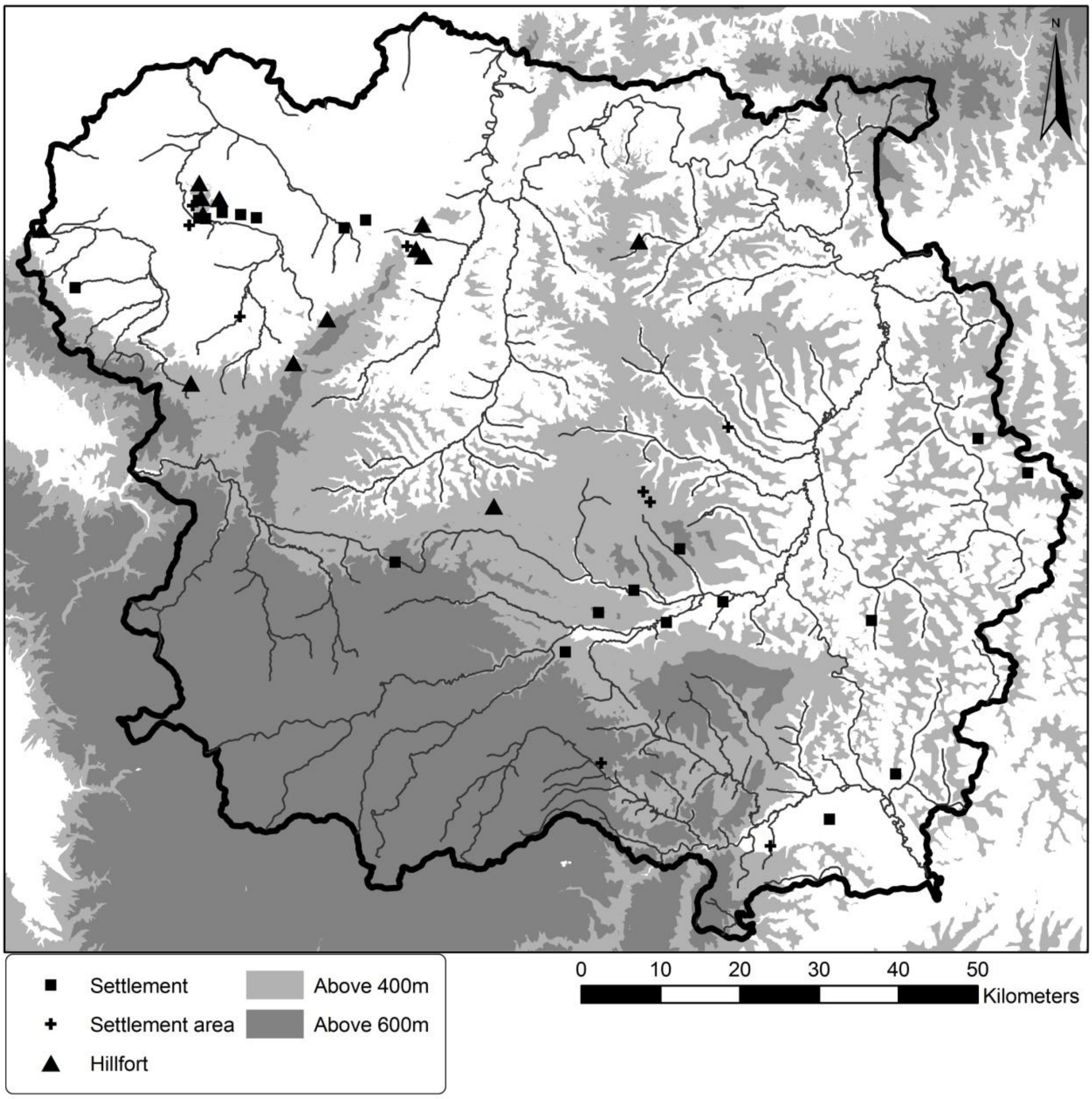


Figure 4.12: Late Iron Age rural settlement and settlement areas in relation to hillforts.

to the Roman and post-Roman period since it relies on intrusive architectural techniques. Forms are also considered below where appropriate excavation has taken place.

Only a small number of rural settlements have been recorded for the Late Iron Age (18 if we do not include those adjacent to the Şimleu Massif), so few meaningful conclusions can be made about settlement patterns (Fig. 4.12). They mainly cluster around the Someşul Mic River Valley and the complex at Şimleu and are characterised by small isolated structures or habitation layers, usually superimposed by later Roman

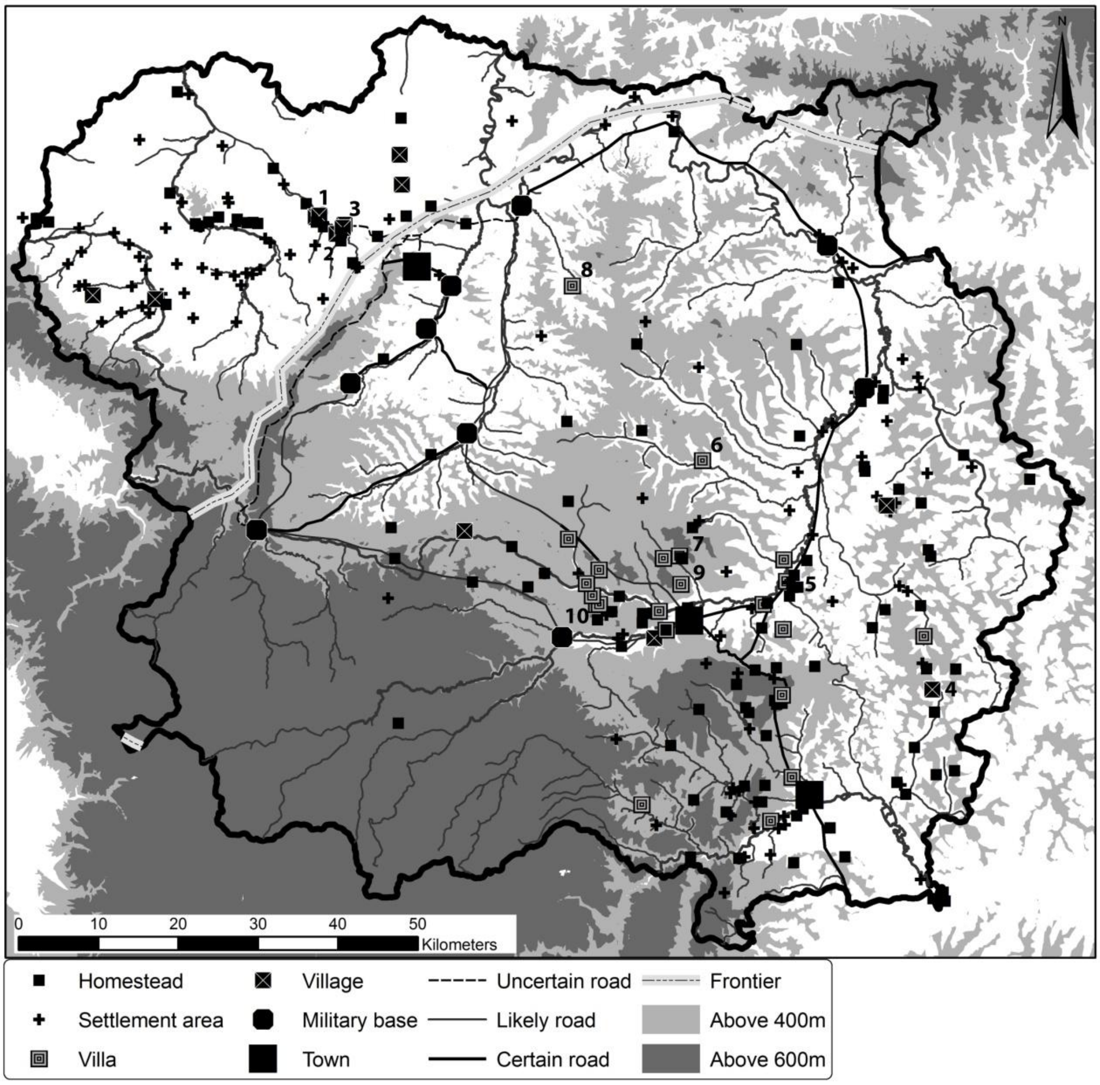


Figure 4.13: Roman period rural settlement, with settlements mentioned in text. 1) Hereclean-Dâmbul iazului; 2) Panic-Uroiket; 3) Zalău-Mihai Viteazul Blvd.; 4) Soporu de Câmpie; 5) Apahida-Târcea Mică; 6) Ciumăfaia-Paluță; 7) Chinteni-Dealul Tulgheș; 8) Gârbou; 9) Cluj-Napoca-Dealul Lomb; 10) Suceagu.

settlements. The absence of good evidence for rural settlement in some of the best agricultural areas and the locations of mineral resources such as salt which were certainly being exploited points to a pattern of residential mobility and dislocation. It is difficult to discern whether this represents a real pattern or simply absence of evidence, but numerous salvage excavations along the Someșul Mic and the fact that archaeologists were actively searching for small homesteads within the paradigm of protochronism make the former look more appealing. Lack of chronological resolution

makes it unclear whether these settlements were inhabited over generations or centuries at a time, but they do not seem to remain fixed or expansive. Their significance in the broader landscape is discussed in Chapter 6.

In the Roman period, the real centres of rural settlement tend to cluster around the river valleys: the Someşul Mic in the Empire and the Zalău River in Free Dacia (Fig. 4.13). Around Napoca, villa architecture seems to suggest high-status inhabitants. Also notable is the apparent expansion of settlement into the foothills of the Apuseni Mountains to the west of Potaissa. The large depression between the Almaş and Agrij Rivers and the valley of the Someş River to the north, the area containing the main cordon of forts of the Meseş *limes*, is conspicuously void of evidence for rural settlement, suggesting that the presence of the military may have discouraged agricultural development.

In the post-Roman period, continuity of life in general is suggested in Free Dacia, since materially at least few changes can be detected (Fig. 4.14). As in the Late Iron Age, the focus of rural settlement is once again the Someşul Mic River Valley, although these settlements tend to cluster around the former town of Napoca. Interestingly, a few of the settlements in the foothills of the Apuseni Mountains to the west of Potaissa were inhabited as well. Between the main centres of settlement, the Meseş Gate and the Someşul Mic River Valley, very few vestiges of life are discernable.

Table 4.14: Patterns of continuity, abandonment and new foundations in Northwest Transylvania.

Period	Continued	Abandoned	New foundation
LIA-Roman	11	4	243
Roman-late 3rd/4th century	89	189	10
4th century-5th century	16	90	7

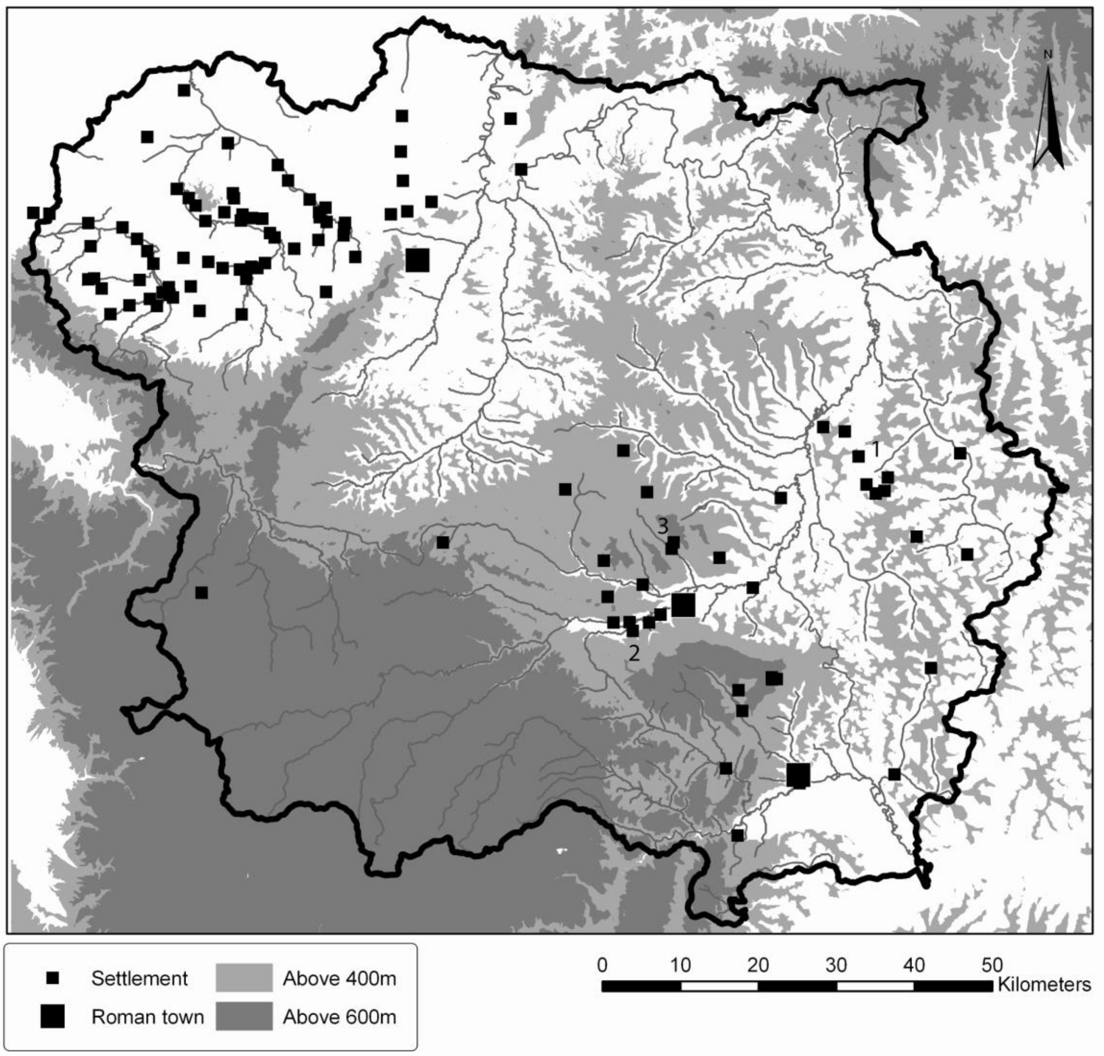


Figure 4.14: Post-Roman rural settlement, with settlements mentioned in text. 1) Sic; 2) Florești-Șapca Verde; 3) Chinteni-Dealul Tulgheș.

Stark discontinuity is suggested in the transition from the Late Iron Age landscape to an occupied province. Table 4.14 depicts the number of rural settlements and settlement areas which continue, cease or are founded in each chronological period for Northwest Transylvania as a whole. Broadly, this shows the colossal expansion of settlement in the Roman period as a result of immigration and possibly forced resettlement; and the two phases of abandonment, one in the late third/fourth century with the departure of the Roman armies, and with the first phase of the Migration Period. These are patterns we might expect given the traditional narrative, but strong

regional patterns are obscured by this, such as the general continuity of settlements in Free Dacia and close to Napoca within the Empire, and strong patterns of abandonment between the Someşul Mic River Valley and the Meseş Mountains.

Refined analysis of rural settlement in the post-Roman period allows even more important conclusions to be made. Brooches and jewellery at a number of rural settlements allow for a better chronological resolution of the phases of transition in the Migration Period (late third century, fourth century, fifth century). Furthermore, the nature of use of settlements could be divided into three categories:

- New foundation: a settlement which appears to originate in the post-Roman period with an absence of materials from the Roman period
- Re-use: a settlement which appears to re-use Roman buildings or materials based on Roman finds in secondary positions; or the usage of Roman constructions which differs drastically from their original purpose (*e.g.*, burial in houses); this is suggestive a hiatus in occupation
- Continuity: a settlement which was inhabited in both the Roman and post-Roman period without any of the above indications

New foundations and re-use only imply that people recently settled in that location in the post-Roman period; but the chance that they are former Roman subjects from nearby is as great as the chance that they are 'migratory' peoples. Equally, continued settlements imply nothing about ethnicity, since this land was inhabited by both Dacians and people from all over the empire.

In the former province, in valley of Someşul Mic, post-Roman finds from the military bases of both Gilău and Gherla may indicate that some of the population associated with the military vici may have remained and tried to preserve life for a long time after the departure of the armies. To the south of Gherla, some of the surface scatters at Sic also indicate some rural continuity, probably associated with homesteads. Finally, a few unclassifiable settlements also appear to continue to the west of Potaissa.

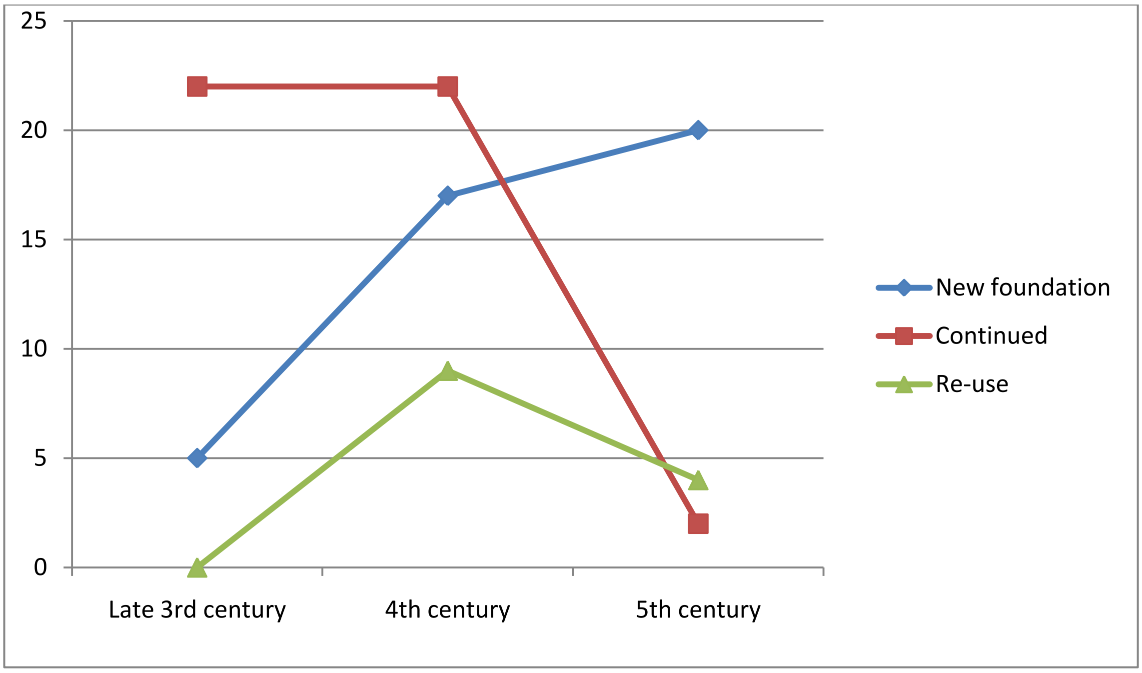


Figure 4.15: Early post-Roman rural settlement in the former imperial territory.

Along with their counterparts in Free Dacia, almost all of these settlements go out of use by the fifth century, while new foundations continue to rise (Fig. 4.15).

The two most important instances of re-use are both around Napoca. At the villa of Chinteni, it has already been noted that a very late phase of occupation is visible in which a fire pit is installed on the remnants of a ruined wall and a new wall is constructed within the main building. The third phase of habitation also overlays a first phase wall, indicating that the walls had fallen into disrepair at the time of the latest occupation (Crişan *et al.* 1992: 106, Fig. 58). Other buildings appear to have gone out of use, indicating that social priorities had changed to the point where the settlement may have ceased to be a 'villa'. Also at Şapca Verde near Floreşti, there appear to be a number of Roman building materials in secondary position, and a Roman well was transformed into a storage pit, although this may have happened earlier (Cociş *et al.* 2008).

Finally, new foundations are found all along the Someşul Mic and its tributaries, mainly around Napoca, but also to the north and west of it. New foundation settlements rise steadily throughout the post-Roman period, indicating increasing dislocation of settlement. It is difficult to ignore the negative correlation between continued settlements and new foundations in the fifth century, which argues for some agglomeration around former towns. Notably, the new foundations are all at middle elevations, whilst the continued and re-used settlements tend to be at lower elevations. Gradual upslope creep around Napoca may indicate that lower lying settlements were abandoned.

Settlement extent also has strong regional characteristics. So few settlements in the Late Iron Age had any information which could be used to establish extent that no meaningful conclusions could be made. Given the strong evidence for re-use of settlements and sporadic habitation in the area of towns, it is equally difficult to say anything about the extent of post-Roman rural settlement. A few of the villages seem to be quite large, such as Floreşti-Şapca Verde, though the Roman well and building materials indicate a substantial Roman settlement was here before. Therefore, extent offers little capacity to help understand patterns of rural settlement in the post-Roman world.

In the Roman period, small rural settlements of less than one hectare dominate the countryside of both Dacia Porolissensis and Free Dacia (Table 4.15). We might expect a large proportion of the settlements whose area is undetermined at present to fall under this category as well. A number of settlements one hectare or larger are present in Dacia Porolissensis, diminishing in number all the way up to the massive multi-period village of Soporu de Câmpie of *c*. 40 hectares (of which it is unknown what extent was actually occupied in the Roman period; see Fig. 4.25). In Free Dacia,

given the small sample of settlements for which extent is known, it is interesting that at least three substantial settlements are noted, all around the Meseş Gate. In general, we see the a gradual expansion of rural settlement size from the Late Iron Age to the Roman period; but it is uncertain whether this pattern was continued into the post-Roman period.

Table 4.15: Rural settlement size in the Roman period (numbers and percentages).

Area	Roman Empire		Free Dacia		Total
<1 ha	26	62%	8	53%	34
1-3 ha	10	24%	3	20%	13
3-5 ha	5	12%	1	7%	6
>5 ha	1	2%	3	20%	4

Construction materials are frequently recorded even in chance finds and surface scatters. In the absence of other evidence, these can give an indication of the relative status among rural Roman settlements. Based on Taylor's (2007: 104) division, the following categories were used:

- Villa: settlements where hypocaust heating system (flue tiles, *tegulae mammatae*), tesserae, painted plaster or column bases are recorded
- Villa-type: settlements where roof tiles and building stone/bricks are recorded
- Traditional: settlements where none of the above materials are recorded

Figure 4.16 and Table 4.16 take into account both settlements and settlement areas to give a better representation of settlements without durable materials. Given this consideration, it is particularly interesting that the distribution of settlements within Dacia Porolissensis between those utilising traditional forms of architecture (semi-sunk, sunken, post-built, post-built with adobe) and those utilising intrusive forms (villa-type and villa) are nearly equal. This may be due to more visible forms of settlement obscuring the less visible forms, especially in surface scatters.

Table 4.16: Architectural elaboration indicating rural settlement status (numbers and percentages).

Architectural Status	Roman Empire		Free Dacia		Total
Traditional	110	55%	83	100%	193
Villa-type	72	36%	0	0%	72
Villa	18	9%	0	0%	18

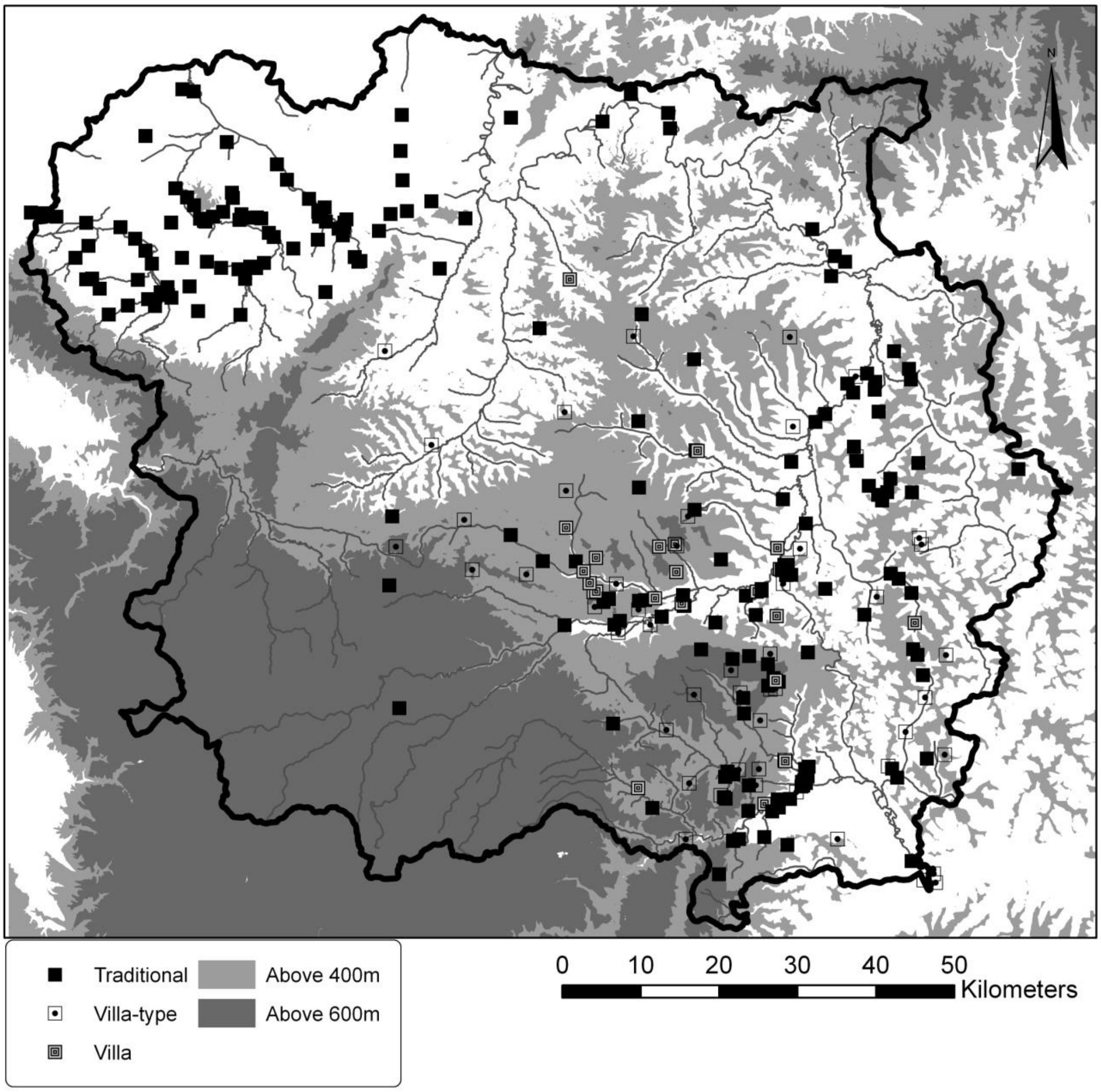


Figure 4.16: Roman period architectural elaboration.

In Free Dacia, no settlements utilise these intrusive building techniques. Occasional bricks and tiles have been located in excavations, but bricks were often used to reinforce the posts in post-built structures (Matei and Stanciu 2000: 90-91). A brick found at Zalău-Mihai Viteazul Blvd. may be explained by its proximity to Porolissum or alternatively the production of bricks in the kilns associated with the settlement. The small scale of these finds in Free Dacia shows that the population was not interested in Roman-style architecture. These instances could be explained by scavenging, but may

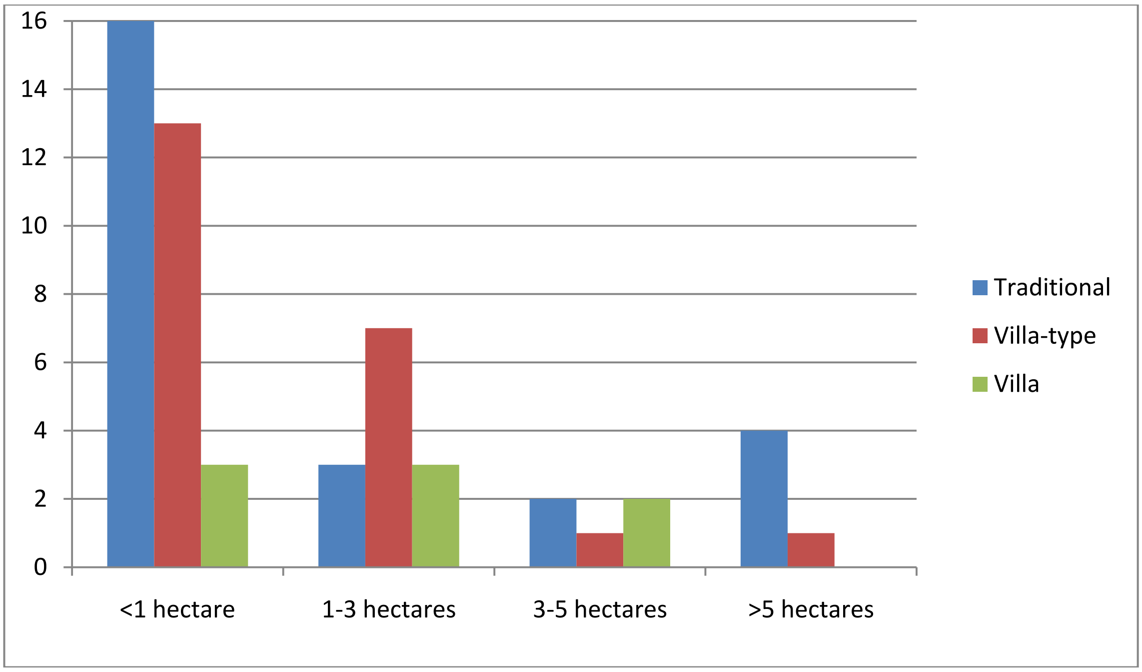


Figure 4.17: Comparison of architectural elaboration and settlement size.

also suggest one of the many points of social contact between the Dacian inhabitants of the Meseş Gate and the Roman army. If kilns were producing tiles in the Roman period, there is no evidence that it was made for local consumption. For a majority of other settlements in Free Dacia, however, social status was displayed in different ways which can only be revealed through excavation.

Figure 4.17 shows the relationship between status as reflected through the architecture and settlement size where it is known. Although traditional architecture is found more often in smaller settlements, it is also present on large nucleated settlements of over five hectares. Instances of settlements with villa architecture remain relatively stable as size grows, but it is striking that not one villa complex seems to exceed five hectares in extent. At the same time instances of pretentious villa-type architecture decreases as settlement size grows. The modest size of settlements with villa architecture which is ubiquitous across Dacia may be explained mainly by the short period of Roman occupation. The villas of Roman Dacia never achieved the

developmental peak of the third and fourth centuries seen in provinces occupied for longer (Oltean and Hanson 2007: 126-127). More important than the lack of large-scale expansion of ancillary buildings and fortifications, however, is the lack any evidence for associated villages growing up around the villas.

In regards to architectural forms, no Late Iron Age rural building plans have been published. The terminology employed to describe them, *bordei*, implies that they are probably of the circular sunken or semi-sunken house type found throughout pre-Roman Dacia both inside and outside hillforts (see Fig. 4.18). These appear to resemble the circular semi-sunken structures of Free Dacia in the Roman period. While a number of plans of Roman period rural structures in Free Dacia have been published, within the Empire no plans have been published in Northwest Transylvania except for villa settlements since these are where the most complete archaeological investigations have been carried out. For the post-Roman period, we rely on a few preliminary reports and monographs for settlement plans. From these plans, the following architectural types are confirmed in Northwest Transylvania:

- Small rounded semi-sunk wattle-and-daub structures, sunken 0.2 – 1.8 meters below the surface, between 4 and 6 meters in area, usually with some post-holes; these are probably found throughout the entirety of the study region in all periods (Fig. 4.18)
- Rectangular *Grubenhäuser*, sunken to a depth of 0.1 – 0.3 meters below the surface and between 9-15 m^2 in area; these are found in Roman period Free Dacia and inside the former Roman Empire in the post-Roman period (Fig. 4.19)
- Rectangular surface post-built structures, greatly varying in size, sometimes with interior partition, found in Roman period Free Dacia (Fig. 4.20)
- Rectangular semi-sunken post-built structures with timber walls, found in Roman period Free Dacia (Fig. 4.21)
- Rectangular buildings with stone foundations and timber walls, covered with roof tiles, found in the empire in the Roman period
- Rectangular *opus incertum* buildings with multiple rooms, found within the Empire in the Roman period and utilised in the post-Roman period

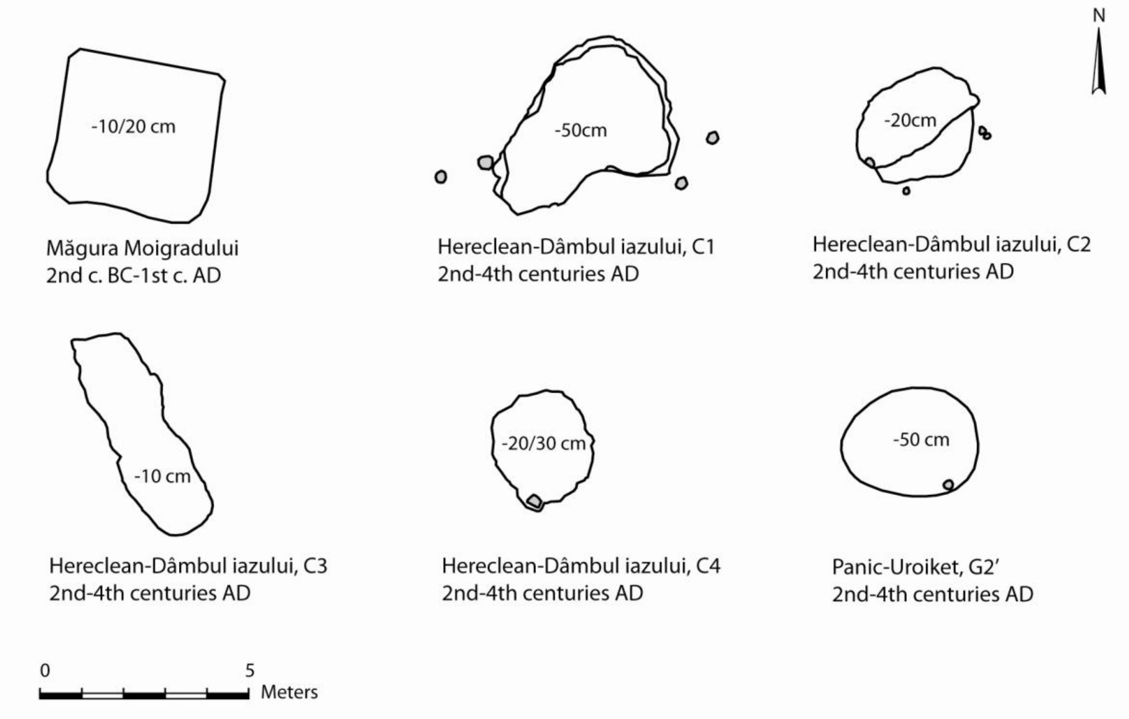


Figure 4.18: Plans of rounded sunken structures in Northwest Transylvania.



Figure 4.19: *Grubenhäuser* in Northwest Transylvania.

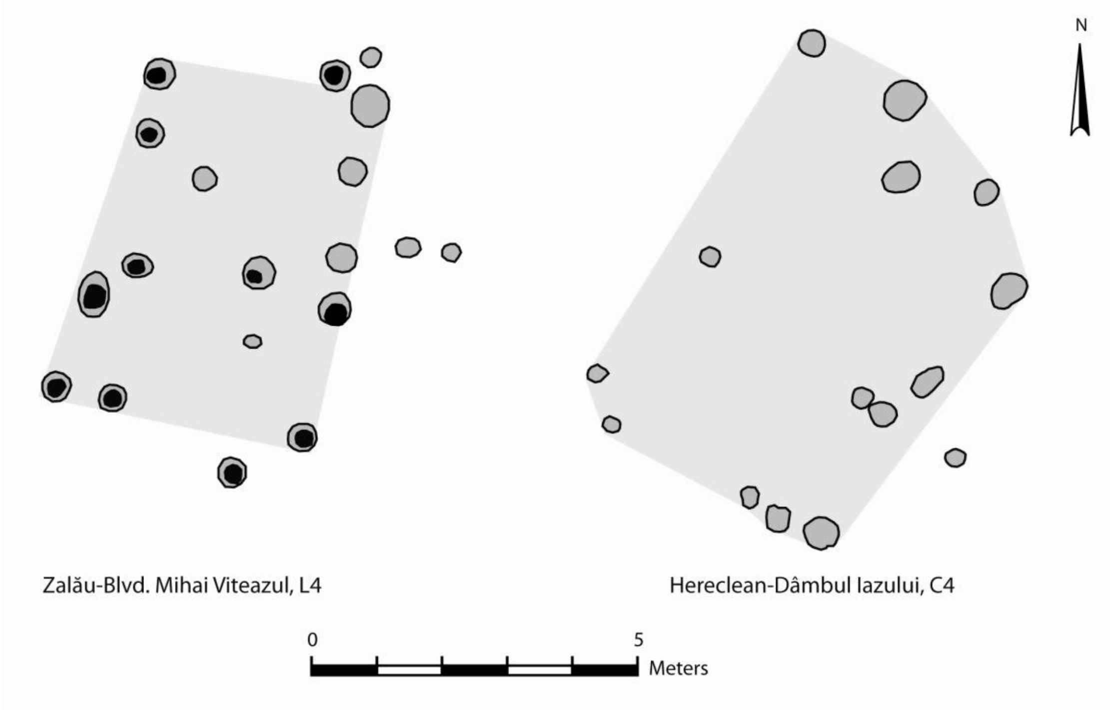


Figure 4.20: Rectangular post-built surface structures in Northwest Transylvania. After Matei and Stanciu 2000: Figs. 16 and 40.

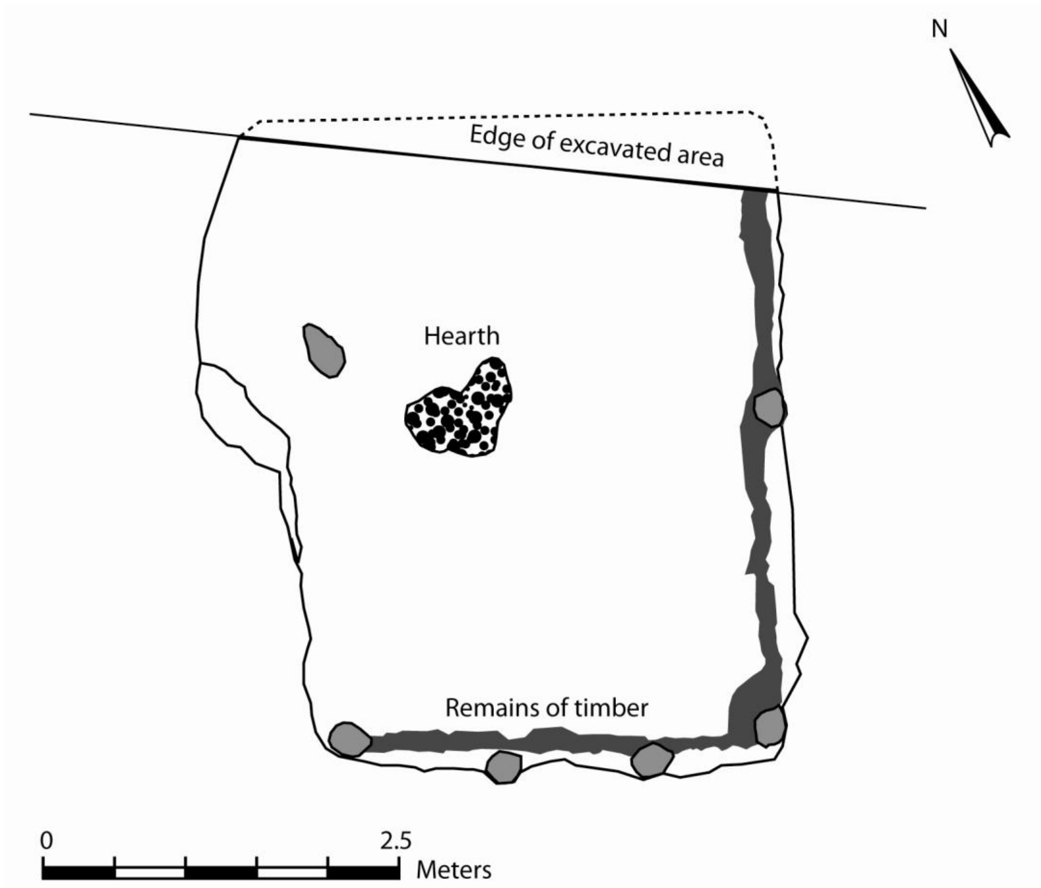


Figure 4.21: Surface structure with timber walls at Hereclean-Dâmbul Iazului. After Matei and Stanciu 2000: Fig. 14.

The following sections look more closely at the layouts, plans and assemblages of the main types of rural settlement in all three periods, since their regional and chronological variations indicate meaningful social differences.

4.4.1. Individual homesteads

Within the study area are 11 certain homesteads dating to the Late Iron Age, identified on the basis of ancient structural remains. Of these a few appear to be directly associated with the substantial hillforts of Şimleu-Silvaniei, and as such have been discussed separately (see 4.1). A sunken hut of the first century AD was excavated at Dealul Tulgheş at Chinteni, on the slope of a hill near the Chinteni River in the pre-Roman layers of the villa settlement Chinteni I (Alicu 1998; Crişan *et al.* 1992: 106). Two semi-sunken houses and an oven dating to La Tène C and lasting into the first century BC were discovered at Someşeni near Cluj-Napoca on a promontory formed by the alluviation of the Someş Mic River (Mitrofan 1965).

In the Roman period, excavations at Aiton have revealed a distinctive type of architecture for Northwest Transylvania, in which a stone foundation with clay is laid out as a base for wooden walls (Crişan *et al.* 1992: 23). The structure was also roofed with terracotta tiles. The foundation of the structure resembles a type that Glodariu (1983) notes in the Orăştie Mountains in the Dacian period, in order to provide a solid surface for wooden structures on the slopes of hills. This may be an adaptation of a local tradition using Roman materials.

Settlements for which structural details are known through excavation, standing ruins or aerial photographs form a small minority of rural sites. Aerial photographs have been the best idea of the shape and size of smaller scattered homesteads because rescue excavations which locate these rarely publish them. For example, a small rectangular



Figure 4.22: Possible Roman period rectilinear building identified from an aerial photograph. Without evidence for features outside of the building, the size can be estimated to be less than 1 ha. Photograph from National Real Estate and Cadastre of Romania website.

structure, almost certainly of the Roman period, has been located using photographs east of the modern village of Soporu de Câmpie (Fig. 4.22). A small circular feature appears to the south, but there are no indications of enclosures or field systems. A small number of these scattered settlements have been located, and an even smaller number excavated, but they do indicate that most rural homesteads in Roman Dacia were unenclosed, small and dispersed.

4.4.2. Villages

Villages are indicated by extensive agglomerations of structures at excavated sites. No villages are known for the Late Iron Age in Northwest Transylvania. The only settlement nucleation appears to be around the Şimleu massif and associated with the

hillforts. Portions of four Roman period villages have been excavated in the area of the modern town of Zalău and its suburbs, part of Free Dacia. The amount of archaeological intervention in the modern town and the subsequent publication of the reports with plans allow for meaningful interpretations, but villages are known within the Empire mainly from surface scatters.

At Hereclean five small structures of varying shapes with associated pits and post structures were revealed. The small size of many of the sunken circular structures throughout Northwest Transylvania makes it likely that some, if not most of these structures were used for storage. However, areas of intense burning inside C2 and C4 at Hereclean may indicate hearths inside, arguing for habitation. Posts set in the ground both inside the structure and outside of the sunken area may indicate roofs or porches supported by these. Profiles indicate that some of these structures were stepped at the edges suggesting either a raised interior surface of a wood platform or means of access to the structures. A single example of a rectangular post-built structure with a sunken floor and timber walls is known at Hereclean (Matei and Stanciu 2000: 48-51, Fig. 14). However, timber walls are only attested on two sides out of three that were excavated. On the side without the line of timber one post-hole was excavated, and thus it was probably open on the northeast side. A hearth was also located inside. This foundation of this structure closely resembles some of the rectangular structures at the hillforts of Şimleu.

What appears to be a substantial village at Zalău-Mihai Viteazul Blvd. reveals a number of semi-sunk rectangular structures (*Grubenhäuser*), post-built surface structures, kilns and storage pits, occupying an area of about 5,000 m^2, although excavators estimated it covered about two hectares (Matei and Stanciu 2000: 86) (Fig. 4.23). A number of smaller postholes around major constructions may indicate fenced

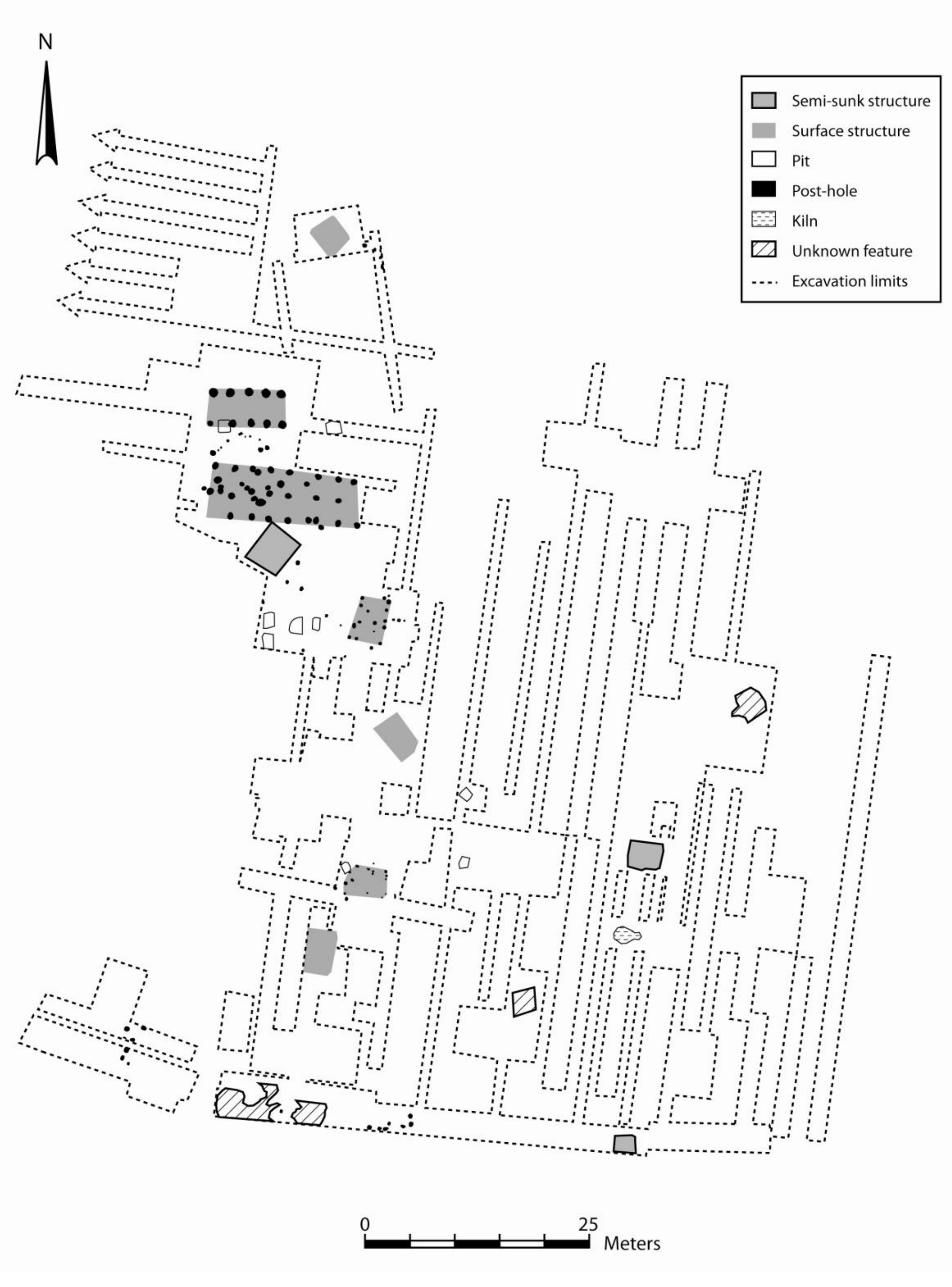


Figure 4.23: Roman period village at Zalău-Mihai Vitezul Blvd. After Matei and Stanciu 2000: Annex 12.

enclosures for animals. Most of the structures do not contain any evidence for hearths; although pits with burnt sides are found near to a number of structures. Bricks and tiles

located at Zalău-Mihai Viteazul Blvd. indicate only their use in the consolidation of the base of the posts.

As this is the only Roman-period settlement where *Grubenhäuser* are found, it is worth mentioning that no circular sunken structures were located over the entire area. Considering their similar size and depth it may be that these structures serve the same function but derive from different traditions. The same type of structure is found within the provincial boundaries in the post-Roman period at Floreşti-Şapca Verde, though reduced in size (Fig. 4.19). Rectangular post-built structures like those at Zalău-Mihai Viteazul Blvd. are known to exist in the Late Iron Age (Glodariu 1983).

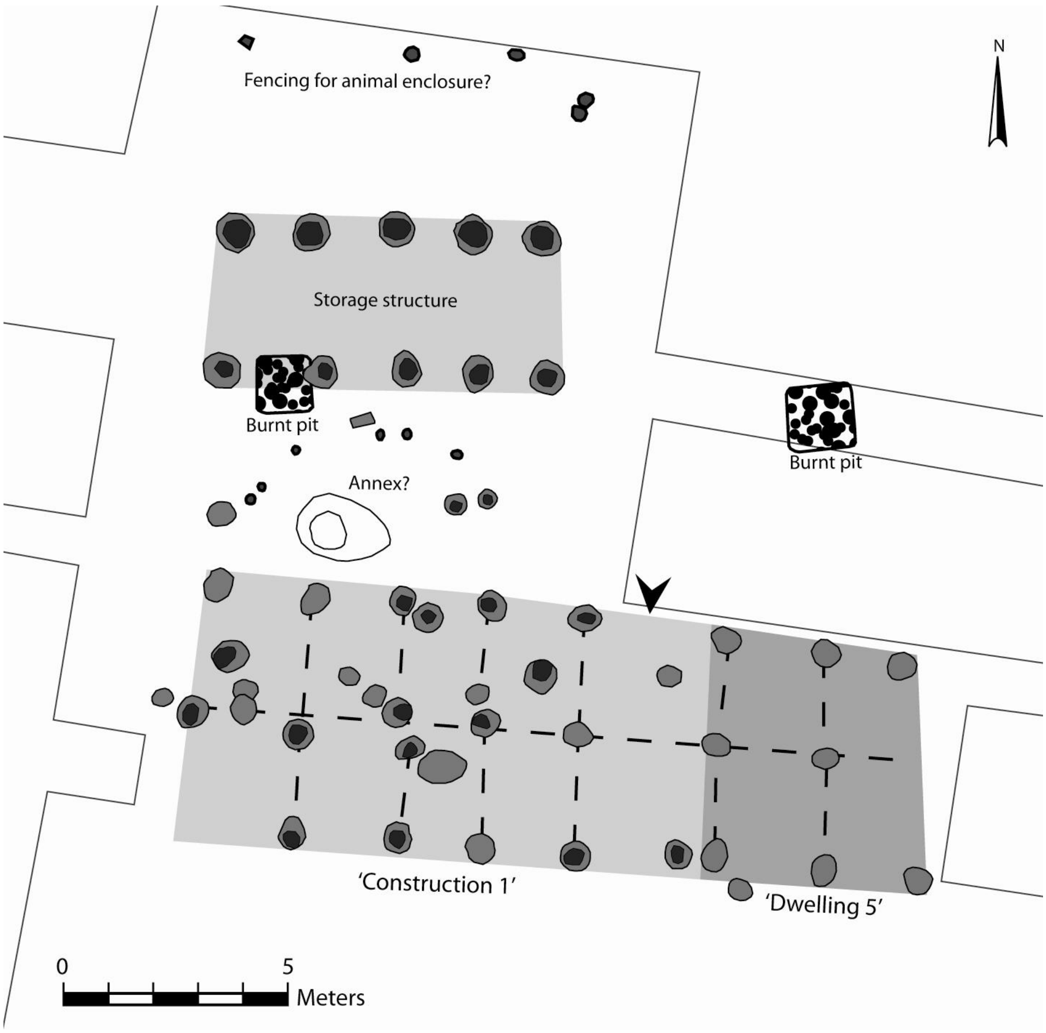


Figure 4.24: Reinterpretation of Construction 1/Dwelling 5 at Zalău-Mihai Viteazul Blvd. After Matei and Stanciu 2000: Annex 14.

Construction 1/Dwelling 5 of this settlement, which the excavators separated into two structures but more likely comprises one single long structure, is vastly different from any other architecture in the entire study area (Fig. 4.24). This very likely represents an isolated example of the byre-house (or aisled house) tradition, which is distributed throughout the Netherlands, Northern Germany, and eventually Scandinavia and Britain, wherein the partition separates the living area from a byre section (Trier 1969; Hedeager 1992: 193-199). By the locations of the posts, it looks to have been able to accommodate around eight cattle through the winter and a small familial unit. As opposed to single-roomed circular dwellings, or *Grubenhäuser*, the partition created a private living area which symbolically, if not physically (perhaps through a wattle-and-daub wall) excluded non-household visitors. The ten-post structure to the north supports this interpretation: frequently raised storage facilities are found in the farmyards of houses built in this tradition, with sizes of around 28 m^2 by the Roman period (Gerritsen 2003: 71-72; Wesselingh 2000: 112-115). Based on the substantial size of its posts and the lack of a living surface, the structure was probably elevated from the ground. At *c*. 30 m^2 in size, it would not be out of place for contemporaneous structures of this type in Northern Europe. A Severan plated *denarius* indicates that it was in use during the early third century.

Because of the extent of excavations for the village in Zalău, we can make some general observations about the layout as well. First of all, there are two orientations for buildings which may indicate different phases of occupation. Six structures and five pits are oriented along an east-west axis; but three structures and one pit are oriented along differently. The proximity of L6 to Construction 1/Dwelling 5 and their different orientations, makes a better case for this. Although there is no way to tell the chronology for certain, the buildings oriented east-west are more likely to have been

later since some appear to be superimposed on earlier features. If the byre-house, oriented east-west, does belong to a later phase, it may represent the establishment of a new economic reality in Zalău in the Roman period based around animal rearing. The architecture of the building is unlike anything found in pre-Roman times in Dacia, and represents both influences from Northern Europe (probably Northern Germany) and a transformation in the socio-economic means by which animals are reared. In addition to the substantial size of the raised structure to the north of the byre-house, interpreted as a storage facility, this central complex shows a centralisation of aspects of cattle rearing and harvesting on a seasonal basis within the settlement which is seen nowhere else.

Another major rural village was discovered using an analysis of aerial photographs. The surface of the multi-period settlement could possible extend 40 hectares, though it is uncertain if this extent is indicative at all of the Dacian, Roman or post-Roman phase. The cemetery of Soporu de Câmpie is well known from excavations in the 1950s (Protase 1976). A surface scatter indicative of Roman period settlement was recorded a significant distance northwest of the cemetery and the modern village. Aerial photography has revealed a large village on the adjacent hill just to the east of the cemetery that is likely of the Roman period, though it looks as if it has other periods of occupation, although no fieldwalking has been conducted here (Fig. 4.25). Circular features, comprising pits and perhaps some dwellings exist alongside larger surface-built rectangular structures. The entire village appears to expand from the top of the hill down the slopes, and thus may even be larger.

In the post-Roman period, villages appear to take up a much more important role. Diaconescu (2004: 134) has suggested that villages located close to Roman towns, but not within them, appear to replace the function of towns as political, social and administrative centres. While some post-Roman period villages are present a significant

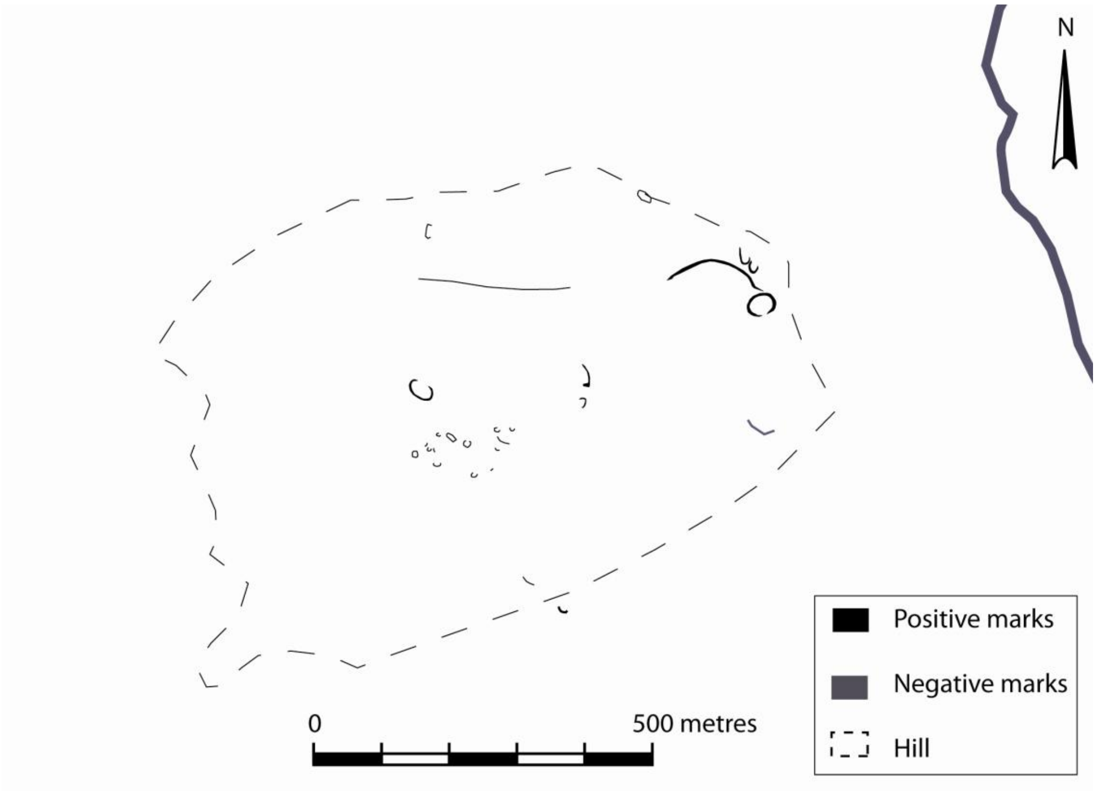


Figure 4.25: Possible multi-period settlement at Soporu de Câmpie from aerial photograph.

distance away from large towns, these are generally one which have continued from the Roman period.

Use of the cemetery at Soporu de Câmpie appears to end in the fourth century, but by the fifth century occupation is attested within the cemetery in a few small sunken houses. These structures were sunk 1.5 to 1.8 meters below the ancient surface, with an earth floor of yellow soil. None of them contained any post-holes or remains of fire pits in the interior. They contained wheelmade ceramics, animal bones, some burnt clay loom weights, iron slag and pieces of querns, indicating permanent occupation.

Another post-Roman village which has been partially excavated is Floreşti-Şapca Verde, a modern suburb of Cluj-Napoca. Only recently have excavations revealed what seems to be the location of a substantial fifth century settlement. Preventive archaeology in an area between Floreşti and Mănăştur known as Şapca

Verde revealed five semi-sunken structures, seven pits, ten burials and a well dating from the fourth to sixth centuries (Cociş *et al.* 2008). Four of the structures had post-holes but the fifth did not. The example published in the preliminary report is sunken into the ancient surface around 0.1-0.2 m and daub from the walls is concentrated on the end and along the central axis (Fig. 4.19). The example looks very much like the *Grubenhäuser* of Free Dacia of the Roman period or the post-Roman dwellings in the cemetery of Soporu de Câmpie. One individual was buried here with two brooches, a metal bracelet and an iron blade. Roman funerary monuments were discovered in secondary positions in the area as well, indicating a possible connection to the town; however, when they were transported to this location is unknown. The extent of the settlement is unknown since investigation only commenced within an area of four hectares out of 34.4 ha which would be affected by building (Cociş *et al.* 2008: 137).

4.4.3. Villas

Within the Imperial Northwest Transylvania, the only published plans of rural settlements are villas. The villa buildings here tend to have a hypocaust heating system installed within the main complex (excepting Chinteni, which has an entirely separate bath complex). Some of them have one or two apses, but in general, they do not follow any prescribed plans for the Danube region as noted by Mulvin (2002) and Smith (1997). However, like their counterparts in central Dacia, they tend to develop in phases from small simple structures and are usually accompanied by a number of small squarish or long rectilinear buildings along an enclosure wall, and not always on the same orientation (Fig. 4.27 and 4.28).

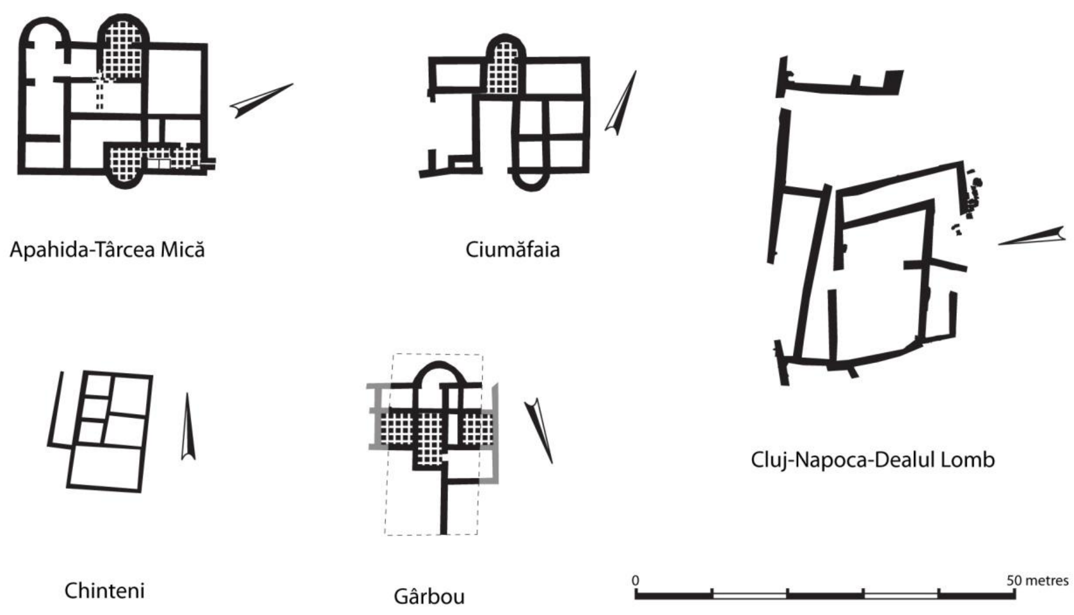


Figure 4.26: Villa plans in Northwest Transylvania. Textured rooms indicate hypocaust installations

Within the study region, excavators have recorded the construction phases at Ciumăfaia and Chinteni. The main building at Ciumăfaia appears to have been constructed in two phases (Fig. 4.27). In the first phase, it was a building with a courtyard and three large rooms to the east in an L-shape. In the southeast corner of the courtyard there was a very small room, interpreted as a tower (Szekeley 1969) or a small shrine (Mitrofan 1973: 133). In the second phase, the easternmost room was shrunk, five more rooms were added including one apsidal room with a hypocaust heating system, and a courtyard was enclosed on three sides to the west.

At Chinteni-Tulgheş, three phases are discernable for the main building (Fig. 4.28). The first phase is a sizable rectangular building sub-divided into six different rooms. A second phase saw drastic subdivision of interior space. In addition, an enclosing wall was added to the west. In the final phase, dating to the fifth or sixth century, walls in some of the rooms may have already been destroyed. A fireplace was

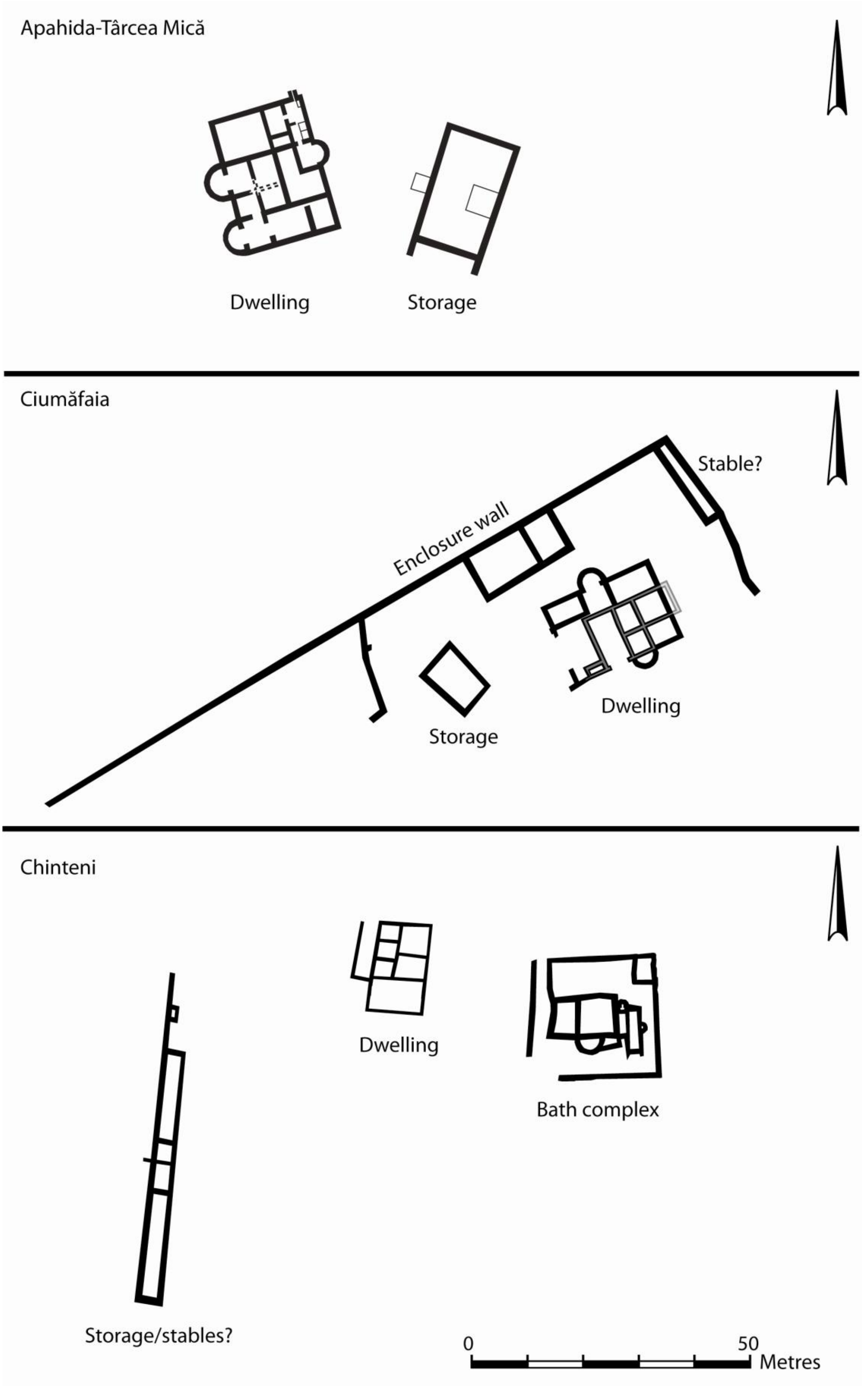


Figure 4.27: Layouts of three excavated villas. Apahida after Buday 1912: Fig. 1; Ciumăfaia after Mitrofan 1973: Fig. 4 (grey walls indicate first phase); Chinteni after Alicu 1994.

installed over one of them and the living surface extends over another. A further wall was installed between the apparent living space and the fireplace.

Although its chronological relationship to the main building is uncertain, four phases are discernable for the associated bath complex at Chinteni. The first two phases do not indicate that it was originally intended as a bath, although a hypocaust system was present. This may well have been the original core living area. The western portion of the original structure was demolished in a fire and a series of basins and a hypocaust was built in its place, along with the construction of an apse to the south, a second large room to the west, and an enclosing wall creating a corridor on the west side of the complex. This third phase, which indicated the conversion of a building with some other function into a bath complex, was dated to the Severan period based on two coins (Alicu 1994).

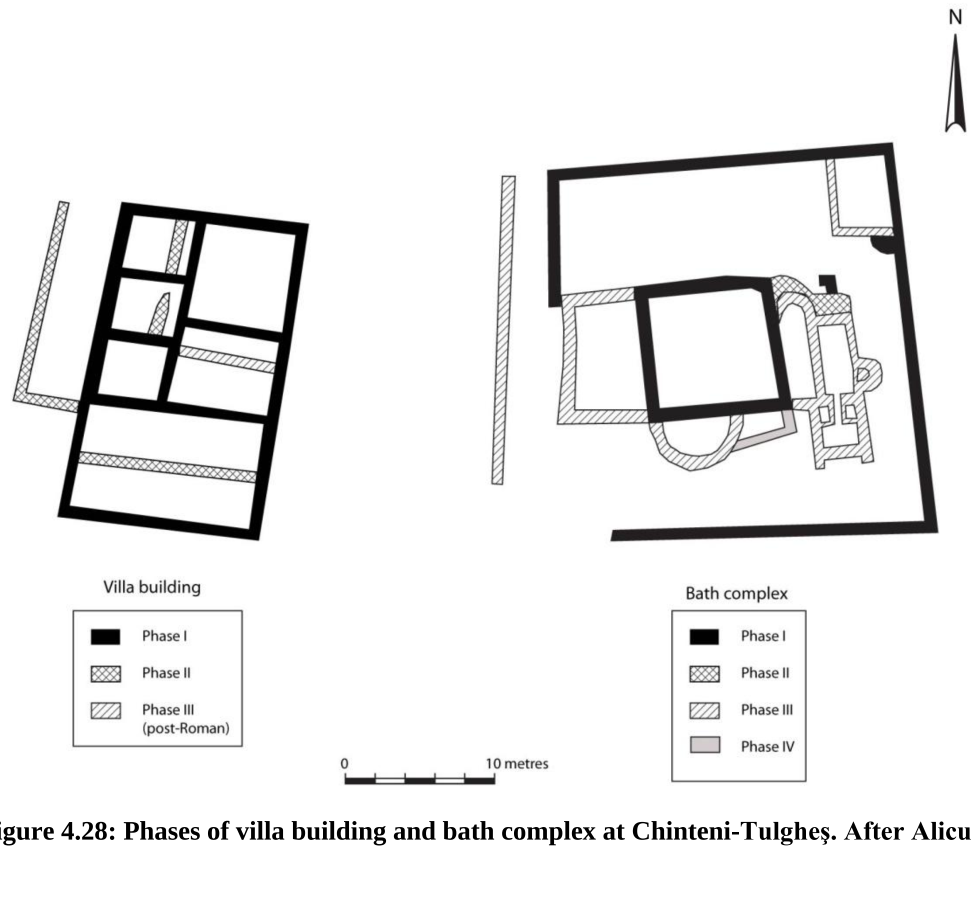


Figure 4.28: Phases of villa building and bath complex at Chinteni-Tulgheş. After Alicu 1994.

It is worth noting some similarities between plans. First of all, as Smith (1997: 207-208) has noted, the apses at both Apahida and Ciumăfaia are in similar places, and are set slightly off axis, suggesting that these rooms might have similar functions. The partially-excavated plan of Gârbou, the northernmost villa settlement which has been located in the study area, reveals a similar layout. Another common feature in three of the buildings is shape and the division of space. At Apahida, Ciumăfaia (phase II) and Chinteni (phase I), the buildings are block-shaped and divided into three columns, a central section flanked by two others, all of which are subdivided into smaller rooms. Oltean (2007: 131-132) has noted this as well for other villas in Dacia (which include Hobita, Cinciș, Aiud). Smith (1997: 207-208) claims the large rooms at the bottom of Ciumăfaia and Apahida are entrance halls, but the entrance was not identified in the excavations. Finally, at Chinteni, Cluj-Dealul Lomb and possibly Ciumăfaia, long narrow corridors flanking the main part of the building are present. Although these could be interpreted as storage areas, at Chinteni a similar wall creates an entrance corridor for the bath. In addition, long narrow rooms in the *pars rustica* of the villas at Ciumăfaia and Chinteni are interpreted as storage rooms, but they may actually be a means of entering the building, rather than a central hall as Smith (1997: 207-208) has suggested. Any such classification is preliminary but these examples show marked similarity in layout and elements.

At this point, it is important to draw attention to the similarity in layout between the villas and other buildings, specifically urban dwellings and military baths. The plan of the first phases of Chinteni and Ciumăfaia are remarkably similar those of the first phase of buildings OL6 and LM3 in the *vicus* of Porolissum (Fig. 4.29). Offset apses, three broad divisions and tiny rooms which characterise Apahida and Ciumăfaia are also visible in the excavated baths of the *vici* of Bologa-Resculum and Ilișua (a fort

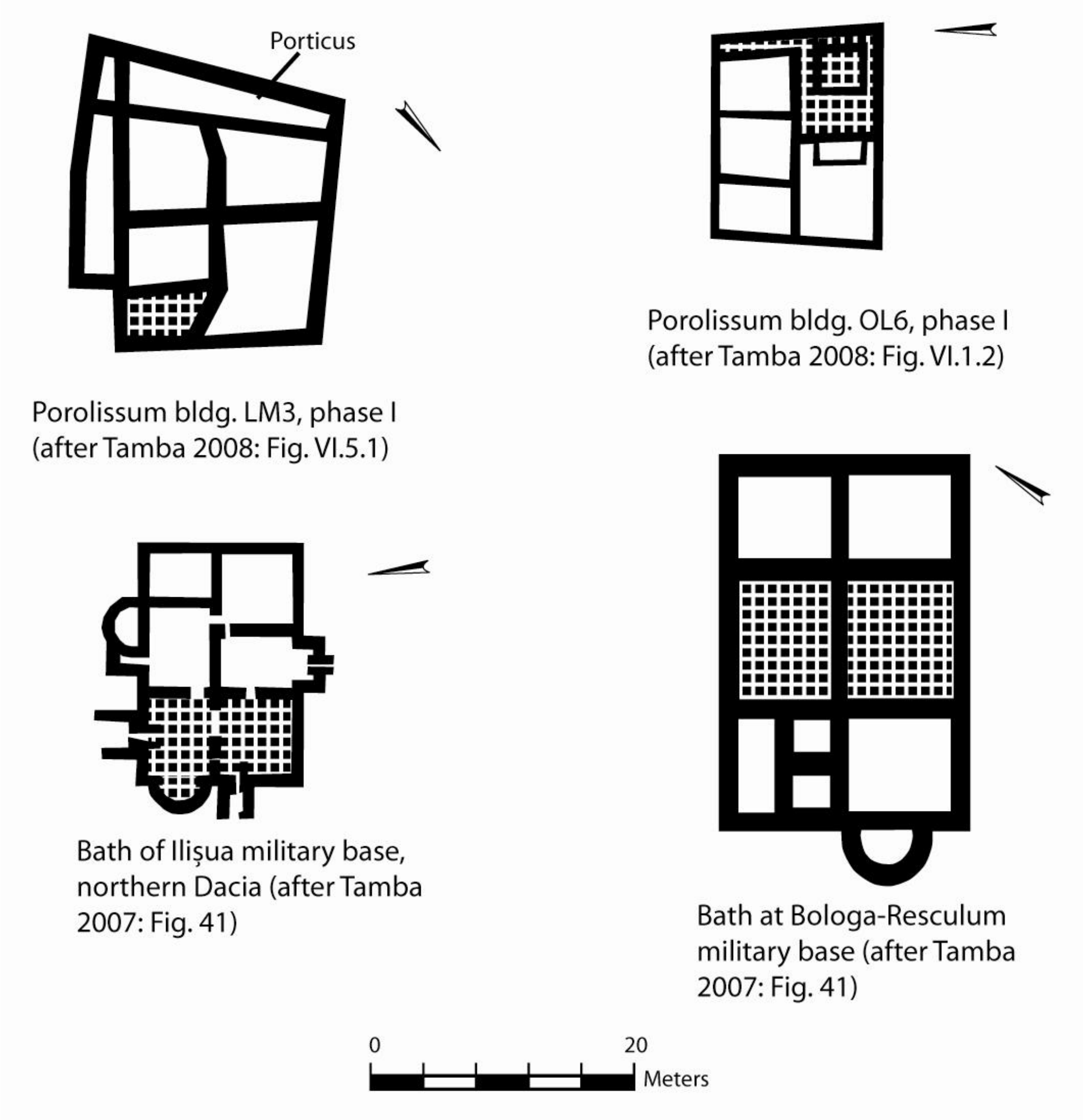


Figure 4.29: Similar tripartite division of space in urban dwellings at Porolissum and military baths in the area.

outside the study area but part of the northern sector of the *limes*). By nature villa architecture reflects and influences urban and military architecture, but this similarity may indicate a specific regional tradition which developed in the Roman period, since nothing similar is found in Late Iron Age structures or in other parts of the province.

4.4.4. Contextualising rural settlement

Northwest Transylvania in each of the three periods discussed was overwhelmingly a rural landscape, as it is today. Settlement dislocation from the Late Iron Age to the Roman period likely to indicate significant changes in land tenure, which is supported by the above evidence for military garrisons replacing the administrative function of hillforts which were abandoned or destroyed. We see in the Roman period the establishment of two seemingly distinct forms of settlement which are not detected in the Late Iron Age of Northwest Transylvania: substantial open villages and large ostentatious homesteads (villas). We also see a movement of settlement from high and middle altitudes to river valleys. With the possible exception of villa abandonment, these transformations in rural settlement did not significantly change until the fifth century. The fact that a number of rural settlements continued into the fourth century suggests that this system endured even after the primary agency which regulated it departed. New settlements were being established in the late fourth century with a huge increase in the fifth century, probably indicating that those systems had finally fallen apart.

In terms of architecture, we do not see the complete disappearance of Late Iron Age traditions in the Roman period. Semi-sunken huts and storage pits continue into the Roman period, and a possible evolution of a Late Iron Age architectural form is present at Aiton. On the other hand, the expansion of stone architecture with bricks and terracotta roof tiles throughout the interior province signals increasing rural adoption of intrusive techniques. The expansion of the *Grubenhaus* type plan which eventually expands from Free Dacia throughout the Northwest Transylvania in the post-Roman period is clearly connected to the spread of Northern European building traditions. The use of the byre-house at Zalău-Mihai Viteazul Blvd. is further evidence for a Northern

European influence, from its layout to its orientation (east-west). This intrusive form of architecture implies that a different form of social organisation accompanied it, which eventually made its way into the former Roman province in the post-Roman period.

Roman architectural elaboration representing material wealth is found on a substantial number of settlements in Northwest Transylvania, though size may not be as strongly connected as we might conjecture. Re-use of these types of materials in post-Roman rural contexts (as at Floreşti and perhaps Zalău-Mihai Viteazul Blvd.) only suggests their role as durable building materials rather than status indicators. In some cases, this may also be true of the re-use of the actual sites themselves, as at the Chinteni villa. In this case, the installation of a hearth on top of a former wall after the settlement appears to have fallen into ruin seems strange if the inhabitants were at all familiar with hypocaust heating systems.

Villas are intricately connected to the urban landscape, especially around Napoca (see 6.3). This is true of architectural forms and materials, as well as epigraphic evidence: an inscription at Ciumăfaia is the only one in Roman Dacia which specifically indicates a veteran origin for a villa owner (Mitrofan 1973: 135-136). Handmade wares in the villas do not prove that Dacians were the owners of these wealthy settlements, just as handmade wares in military contexts do not prove native residence, contrary to Oltean and Hanson's (2008: 125-126) interpretation. Villas may have fulfilled a similar role in the countryside that military centres did in the north of the province, in that they were venues for the establishment of social contacts between natives and colonists. What the exact nature of that relationship was is uncertain, but certainly it placed the owner of the villas in a superior position. Handmade wares could be explained by enslavement of Dacians or the marriage of members of the household to native widows.

The evidence for settlement size suggests a gradual increase in site size in the Roman period, followed by a period of decline in the fourth century. Major villages of the Roman period are found at Soporu de Câmpie, Zalău and Aghireşu, representing very different characteristics of location and showing that no single factor, such as proximity to roads, can explain the location of rural agglomeration. This supports the historical narrative for the influx of colonists from the entire Roman Empire following the wars. However, if we do not include the sprawling settlement around Şimleu, which is clearly associated with the hillfort, large villages are only characteristic of the Roman period and the fifth century. This is an important observation since Dacian villages play such an important role in the dominant Romanian narrative.

Both Nandris (1981) and Diaconescu (2004) subscribe to the idea that at the time of the Roman conquest, and into the Roman period, Dacians lived in small villages; and yet not a single one has been located in Northwest Transylvania. In the east, however, excavations have revealed small Dacian villages at Slimnic, Şura Mică, Ruşi, and Sibiu-Guşteriţa, all of which continue occupation into the Roman period (Glodariu 1972; Glodariu 1981). In the southeast, in the territory of Romula, what may be substantial cemeteries at Gropşani, Leu, Daneti, and Locusteni, all in low plains, are attributed to Dacians (Popilian 1980; Popilian 1982; Popilian and Nica 1998; Popilian and Niţă 1982; Diaconescu 2004: 126). Two facts may explain this discrepancy. First of all, Dacian villages which continue use into the Roman period are more visible because they often have more recognisable material culture, and this may in fact obscure earlier usage. A number of 'Roman' villages in Dacia may pre-date the second century. Connected to this is the fact that even Roman villages are more obscured in a landscape full of towns, military bases, small fortifications and important river networks. Every single town established in Roman Dacia north of the Danube area was on the western

half, providing more points of contact and exposure to Roman life-ways; but in the rural east, the military and a few roads were the only points of contact. Thus, continuity was much more probable in existing Dacian villages, and therefore eastern Dacian villages are more archaeologically visible. While this is a possibility, we must also consider an overwhelming majority of Dacian settlements in Northwest Transylvania, even amongst the large number of salvage excavations in recent years, are small, open individual settlements. Without more evidence, it seems prudent to suggest that individual settlements were more frequent than multi-unit villages in Late Iron Age Northwest Transylvania

In the post-Roman period, villages once again emerge as important forms of settlement which are close to former Roman towns and important resources. Floreşti appears to be a kind of suburban village, distinguishable from Roman period villages because it appears to be substantially larger with more finds implying status (brooches, coins, jewellery) and are generally associated with equally rich burials. The situation at Floreşti may be comparable to that of Potaissa, where re-use of the settlement area, rather than continuity of the settlement itself, is suggested in the area of a large and important town. Evidence for more suburban villages on the basis of chance finds and artefact scatters in the Someş Mic River Valley is discussed in Chapter 6.

4.5. Land-use, industry and consumption

Attention is now drawn to the relationship between archaeologically conspicuous activities and settlement types.

4.5.1. Cultivation

Evidence for farming practices Dacia is sparse, and so a discussion of agriculture must be augmented by data from modern land-use. Nandris' (1981) study of palaeobotanical evidence from Dacian citadels in the Orăştie Mountains revealed about 45 varieties of cultivated plants, including wheat, barley, rye, millet, flax and poppy. Nandris (1981: 236) concluded that the inhabitants of the citadels preferred a diet high in cereals, low in legumes and fruit; and that arable agriculture made the most significant contribution to the Dacian economy. This is supported by the fact that the hillforts in Northwest Transylvania tend to be located in areas with high agricultural potential (Fig. 4.30). One exception is Şimleu-Observator, which is hindered by steep slopes and gullies but whose socio-political power probably extended beyond the immediate agricultural territory.

Cereals were probably cultivated in river valleys near to hillforts in the Late Iron Age, such as the Crasna Valley at the base of Şimleu. We might also expect small-scale cultivation on the hilltops themselves where direct sunlight lasts much longer every day generally than on the sides of the hills or in the narrow valleys. Despite the fact that the terraces on the hill were utilised for defensive purposes, we cannot rule out that these might have doubled in some areas to create a flat surface for agricultural purposes.

Pre-war and modern land-use indicates that despite the slightly acidic quality of the soil and the tremendous slopes of the Şimleu Hills, the land on the hill slopes can be productively utilised for viticulture. Strabo (vii. 3. 11) suggests that the Dacians may have produced it at one point. In addition, the Romanian word for grapes (*struguri*) appears to have been transmitted from the Dacian language (Russu 1967). However, no traces of wine-making have been found anywhere in Late Iron Age Dacia. Furthermore,

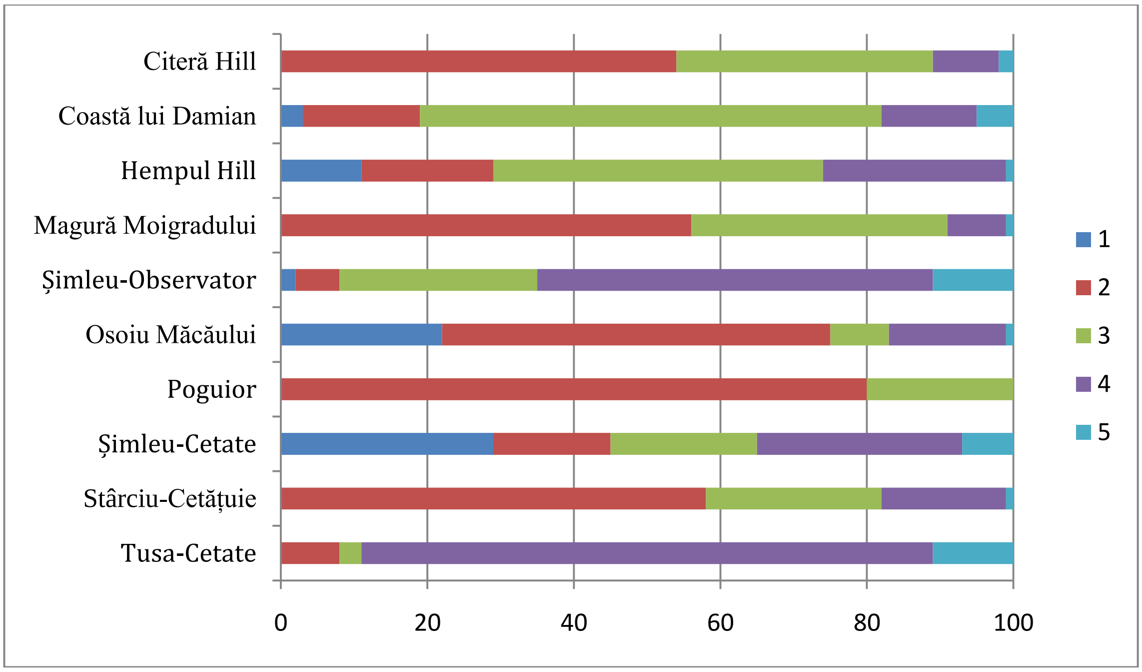


Figure 4.30: Percentages of agricultural potential within the area of a one-hour walk from hillfort (1=highest quality, 5=lowest quality).

while the consumption of wine in Dacia may be indicated by metal vessels associated with feasting (Florea 2004), only one bronze vessel has been found in Northwest Transylvania, near Marca (Pop 2008: 48). If wine was being produced or consumed in Late Iron Age Dacia, there is little evidence for it in this region. Thus, cultivation of vines on the hill slopes is unlikely.

In the Roman period, evidence is more abundant, but lacks significant palaeobotanical studies. Grapes were cultivated in the province, as associated wine production is attested by a *cella vinaria* dating to the first half of the third century along the Arieş River at Potaissa (Cătinaş and Bărbulescu 1979). Cereals were a staple of the Roman military diet, and so it is expected that a majority of land around larger settlements was allocated for these, as in modern Transylvania. The only published seed analysis that has been conducted in Free Dacia has shown bread wheat and peas were consumed in the Roman period, and so cultivation practices may not have been especially different (Matei and Stanciu 2000: 105).

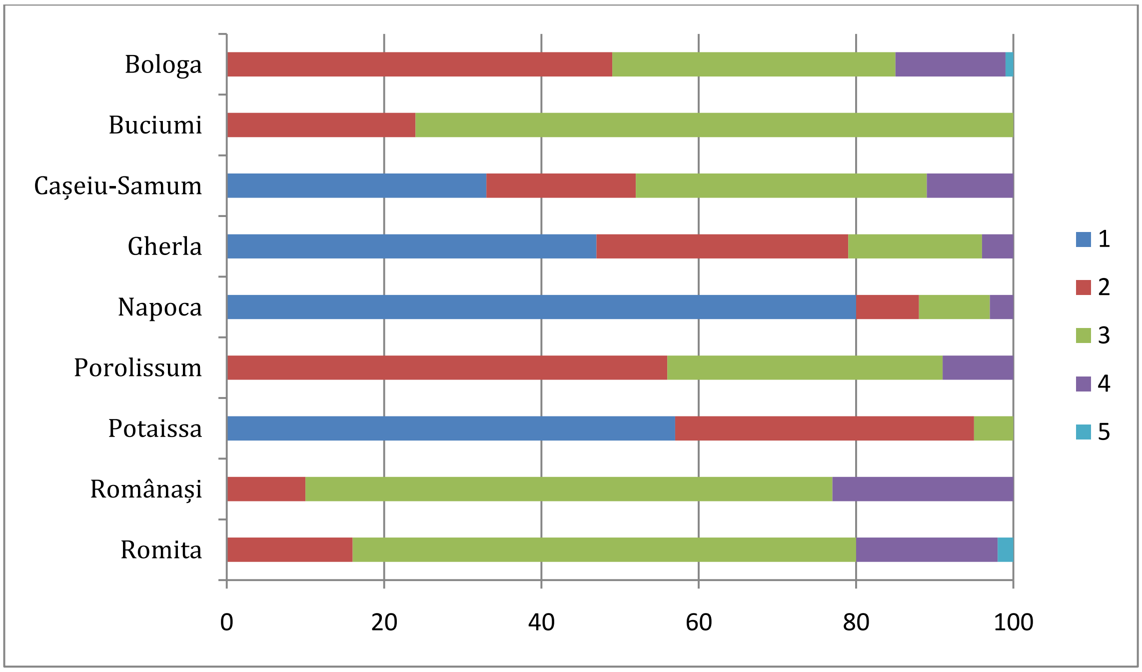


Figure 4.31: Agricultural potential for Roman military bases and towns.

The towns of Napoca and Potaissa, along with Dierna, Sarmizegetusa and Apulum received *ius Italicum* under Septimius Severus, exempting this rich agricultural land from taxes (*Dig*. l. 15. 1. 8-9). This fits into a general pattern of rewarding military units for their service (veterans were likely situated around Napoca as attested by the inscription at Ciumăfaia; see 4.4), and also encouraged the exploitation of the great agricultural potential at both Napoca and Potaissa (Fig. 4.31). The major rivers along which they were situated also connected them to other areas of the fertile river valleys, as is also the case with the fort of Gherla.

Despite the strategic and communicative value of the Meseş Gate area, good quality land for cultivating cereals was rather limited. The hill slopes are prone to erosion and the altitude in many parts of the Meseş Mountains exceeds the nationally-defined 'marginal' level (600 m). In addition, the soils do not favour particularly rich yields, a factor in the modern focus on pasture as a dominant form of land-use. The brown podzols on which Porolissum is situated, even when the forest cover was cleared,

are not good for cultivation. Some of the worst areas for cultivation in the modern period are also the areas where no settlements have been detected.

To feed the soldiers at the fort on Pomet Hill alone, Gudea and Tamba (2001: 67-69) have calculated that around 700 ha of arable land would have been needed to cultivate cereals, well above the area which could be traversed in several hours on foot outside of the fort. Normally, this would imply that the military would depend heavily on provincial supply networks; and yet the study of pottery from stratigraphically excavated deposits of the Porolissum Forum Project shows that the inhabitants of Roman Porolissum relied upon their hinterland for quotidian needs. Only a modest amount of imports are present in the early phases, and in later phases imports are quite rare and appear to derive from neighbouring regions rather than the Mediterranean (De Sena, forthcoming). This implies a heavy dependence on levies and local markets.

Storage facilities (*horrea*) have been found at most of the forts where the interior layout is known. In the countryside, pits within and outside of dwellings were a preferred means of storing grain and other household items. A rectangular ten-post structure at Zalău-Mihai Viteazal Blvd. may be interpreted as a storage facility, raised above the ground to prevent vermin and moisture from rising up. Based on interpretations at other excavations in Northern Europe (*e.g.*, Gerritsen 2003: 71-72), this structure was probably used to accommodate grain and hay. In contrast to storage pits, which are found ubiquitously throughout Dacia, this structure indicates that at this settlement there was either an increase in the amount of grain and hay produced and stored or a change in storage strategies, whereby storage was concentrated in fewer structures.

Millstones were also found at 12 rural sites (nine settlements, three settlement areas, one isolated find), all but one of which date to the Roman period. These indicate

grain processing in living areas (Zalău-Mihai Viteazul Blvd.) and perhaps off-site as indicated by their presence in 'settlement areas' and as isolated finds.

4.5.2. Animal husbandry

Thanks to a number of studies on animal bone assemblages from Dacian and Roman settlements, a good deal more is known about animal consumption than farming. For Dacian citadels, Nandris (1981: 248-249) offers evidence for the consumption of domesticated species of hens, cats, dogs, goats, sheep, pigs, and horse and wild species of elk, aurochs, bear, deer, boar, wolf and beaver. Some Romanian words for animal products, most importantly cheese (*brânze*) and whey (*zer*), were transmitted from the Dacian language, indicating that goats and cattle were certainly utilised for these purposes among others. Studies of animal bones have been carried out for two of the hillforts in the study region, Măgura (Haimovici 1993; El Susi 1999) and Şimleu-Cetate (El Susi 2000), and these can be compared to data from other Late Iron Age settlements (Figs. 4.32 and 4.33). The Şimleu-Cetate assemblage consisted mostly of the domesticated species of swine, followed by cattle, goats and sheep and a significant minority of horse. In comparison with other hillforts, Şimleu-Cetate had a high percentage of wild animals (over 30 per cent) (A. Gudea 2007: 224-226). The high percentage of both wild animals and domesticated swine may be explained by the thick forest which covered most of the uninhabited parts of the Şimleu Massif in antiquity. The assemblage at Măgura contained a large proportion of cattle (67.9 per cent) followed distantly by swine and then sheep and goat, and a small amount of horse. The sample was recovered from numerous pits at Măgura, which are interpreted as ritual depositions (see 5.2). Because of this, the sample may not be indicative of the actual consumption patterns since, for example particular parts of particular animals might

have been preferred for these rituals. However, if it does reflect actual overall patterns for the settlement, the area to the north along the Ortelec River would have been an excellent place for grazing.

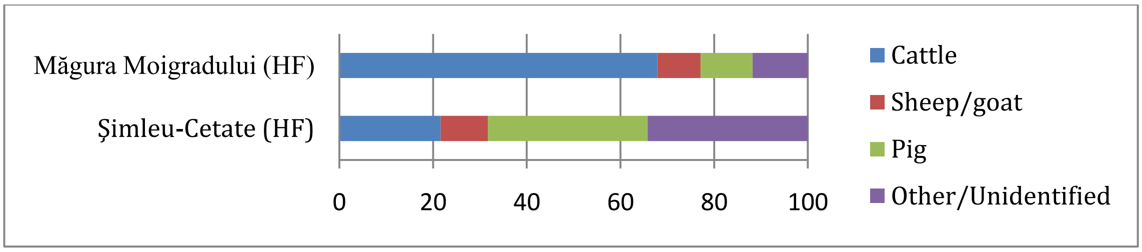


Figure 4.32: Animal bone assemblages for Late Iron Age settlements within the study area. After data from A. Gudea 2007.

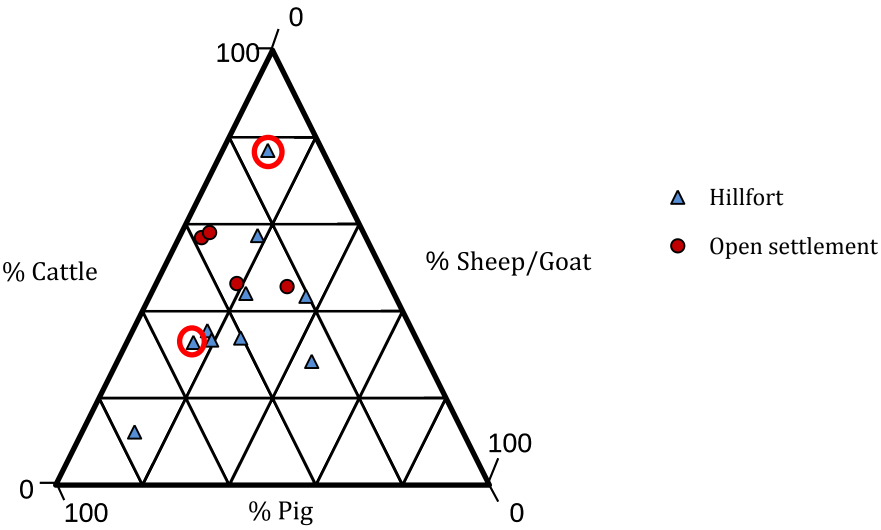


Figure 4.33: Triangular graph showing relative percentages of cattle, sheep/goat and pig bones from Late Iron Age (1st century BC-1st century AD) settlements in Dacia. Red circles indicate settlements from the study area. After data from A. Gudea 2007.

Şimleu has published data concerning sizes and ages of the animals (A. Gudea 2007: 231-241; El Susi 2000). While most domesticated cattle are slaughtered after 3 years at other hillforts and Dacian sites in general, nearly half of the cattle at Şimleu are slaughtered at around two years. These values both fall within the prime meat age for cattle (1.5-3.5 years) and so do not necessarily represent different husbandry strategies,

but simply a preference for younger animals. Sheep and goats were also slaughtered at a younger age here than other hillforts (68 per cent under two years), although pig follows the general pattern for other Dacian sites at one to two years. Height variation is also very regular at Şimleu among all of the species represented, as at other Dacian sites, indicating that there was little interest in importing animals or selective breeding. In summary, although patterns vary from settlement to settlement, the evidence from these two hillforts of Northwest Transylvania indicates that the Dacians made use of both forests and river valleys in close proximity for grazing animals, and in some cases hunting them.

Although no published faunal data exists for individual Iron Age rural settlements within the study area, there are examples outside (A. Gudea 2007: 226, 229). As with the faunal assemblages at hillforts, individual settlements tend to show immense intra-site variation, although cattle consumption is usually higher than goats and sheep and pig (with only two exceptions). Most sites showed slaughter of cattle and pigs within their prime meat age, whilst goats and sheep were slaughtered at ages that varied immensely from settlement to settlement (A. Gudea 2007: 225-241).

For the entire spectrum of Late Iron Age settlement in Dacia, there does not seem to be any particular patterns of animal consumption, as cattle, pig and sheep/goat show strong variation from settlement to settlement. Factors particular to individual settlement location and local choices appear to be the strongest influences on animal consumption.

Pastoralism in the Roman period is characterised by intensification. Gudea's (2007) study of faunal evidence from sites in Roman Dacia indicates the consumption of cattle, pig, sheep and goat, chicken, dogs, cats, horses, goose and possibly donkey;

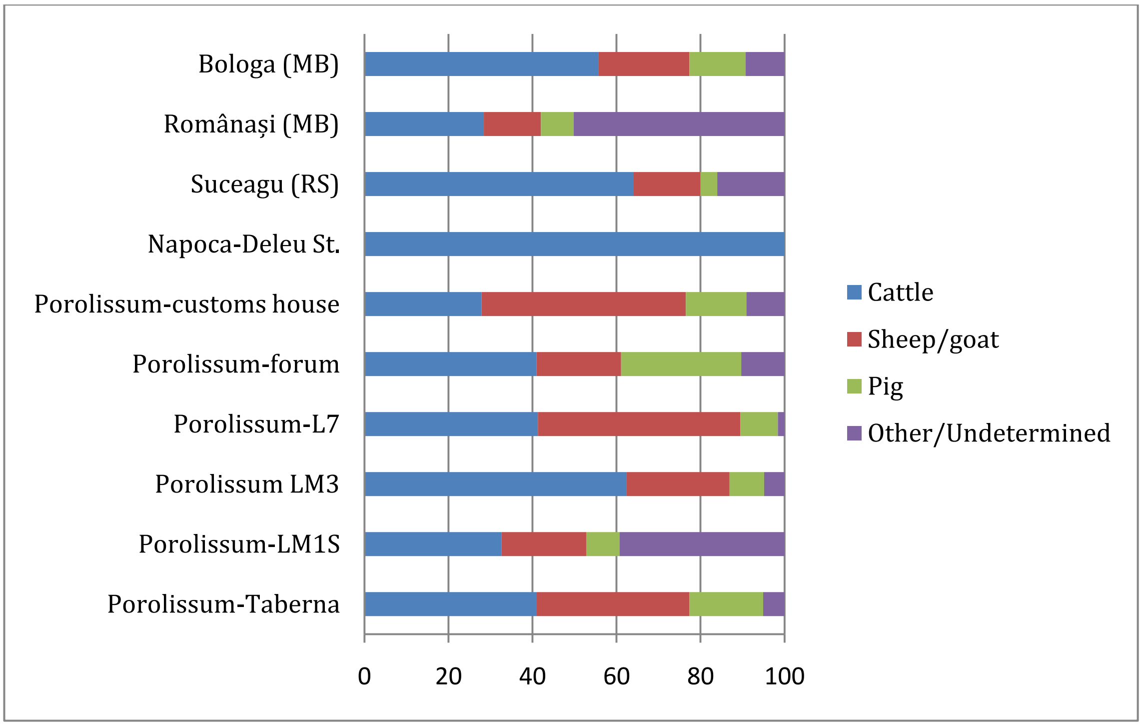


Figure 4.34: Animal bone assemblages from Roman period settlements within the study area. MB indicates military settlement, RS rural settlement. After data from A. Gudea 2007.

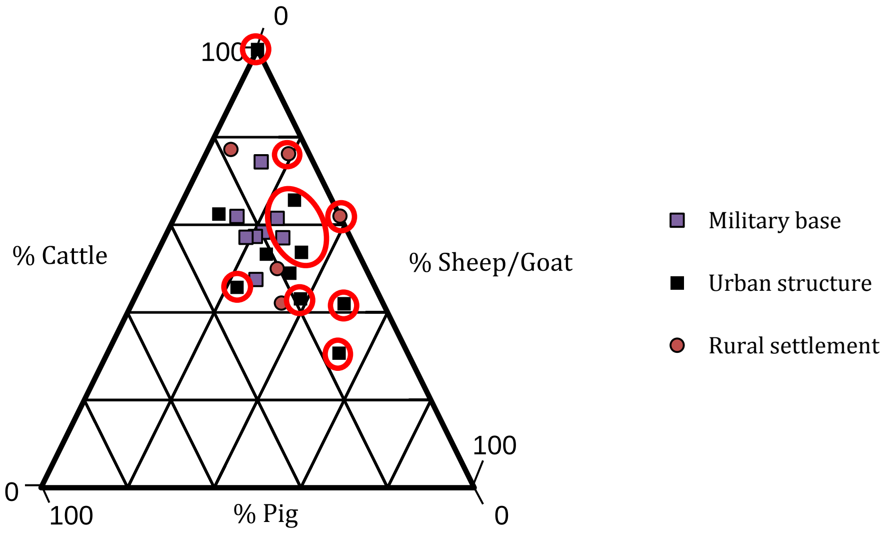


Figure 4.35: Triangular graph showing relative percentages of cattle, sheep/goat and pig bones from Roman settlements in Dacia. Red circles indicate settlements from the study area. After data from A. Gudea 2007 and M. McKinnon (pers. comm.).

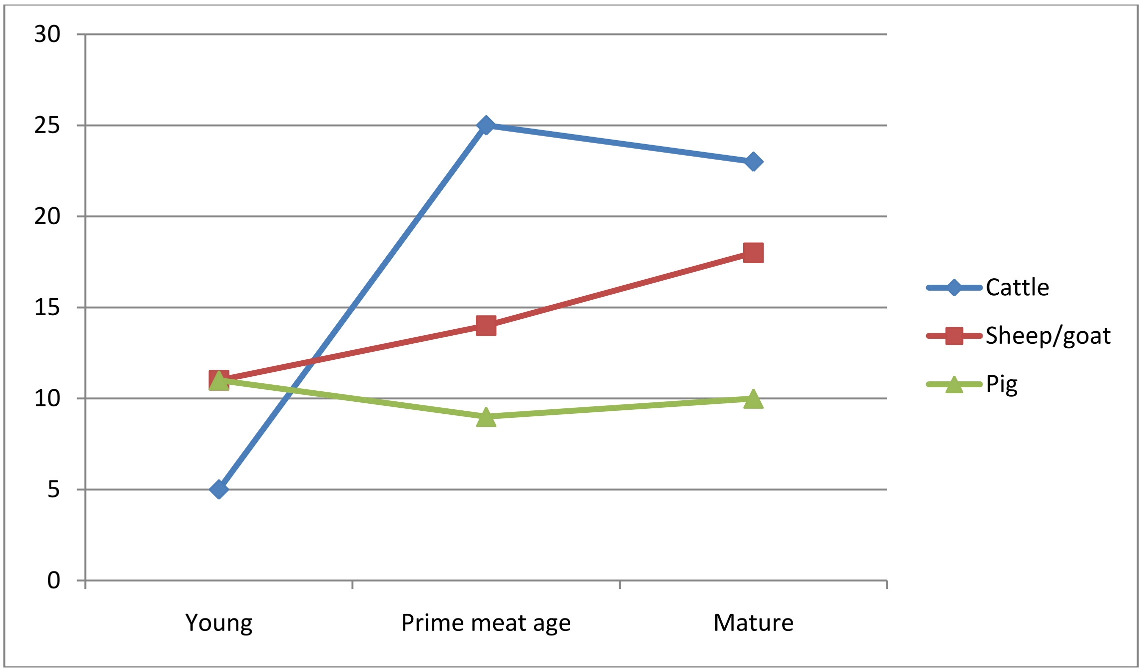


Figure 4.36: Animal slaughter ages at Porolissum, when age is determined. After data from A. Gudea 2007.

and wild species such as boar, roe deer and red deer (Fig. 4.34 and 4.35). The most extensively studied urban area is that of the *vicus* of Porolissum. Cattle were the animals of choice, but with regional and intra-settlement variations. For example, the customs house and building L7 at Porolissum are the only buildings studied at Porolissum that contain a minority of cattle bones. The small assemblage studied at Napoca contained all cattle bones. The greatest majority of cattle were slaughtered at both Porolissum and Napoca at prime meat age and older, indicating a husbandry strategy that probably included obtaining meat and milk, breeding, and draught for fields outside of the towns. Significant variation in the sizes of the individuals suggests multiple breeds of cattle. Sheep and goat were kept into old age, most likely for milk and wool rather than meat, as the assemblage at Porolissum indicates (Fig. 4.36). The assemblage of pig contains both young and mature animals, although pigs were rarely used for anything other than meat consumption. All body parts are represented at Porolissum indicating local raising, butchery and consumption. Urban assemblages show that animals were used for a

number of purposes in a non-specialised husbandry strategy, including meat, religious sacrifice, draught, milking and breeding. Cattle and pig were mainly sources of meat, but sheep and goat were used for other purposes.

Two forts within the study area have been subjected to archaeofaunal studies (Românaşi and Bologa). The assemblages differ extensively (Fig. 4.35). Relatively high percentages of bones from game animals came from the Roman forts at Românaşi (6 per cent), Bologa (21 per cent) and from the forts of Hinova (40 per cent) and Pojejna (20.4 per cent) outside of the study area (A. Gudea 2007: 229). Both Bologa and Românaşi, it should be noted, are situated along the Meseş Mountains where there would have been a good deal of forest for hunting activity; but compared to other types of settlements where faunal data has been published, these statistics are quite high. We might infer that in general hunting was a more important activity at forts than other types of Roman settlements.

Of the domesticated animals, cattle were again the clearly dominant animal at all of the forts, but their quantity varied from site to site. The cattle bones comprise over half the assemblage at Bologa but only 28 per cent at Românaşi. On the other hand, pigs and goats and sheep varied very little from site to site. At Românaşi, pigs were slaughtered at a relatively young age (at least four before 1.5 years, and one at 2 years) (A. Gudea 2007: 160-162). This indicates that pigs, along with cattle, were primarily raised for meat, whilst goats and sheep provided other products. Samples taken from the military *vici* at Durostorum and Stolniceni appear to follow similar patterns to forts, except for the high proportion of cattle bones at Durostorum, explained by the availability of pasture in its proximity along the Danube. The assemblages at Românaşi and Bologa both differ from those at other forts which have been studied, as well as from regional patterns along the Meseş Mountains.

The only Roman period rural settlement from the study area for which archaeofaunal data were published is Suceagu (Fig. 4.34). A small sample of faunal data (50 bones) indicates once again a preference for cattle (Gudea 2007: 159-160). Although adequate data are lacking on pigs, cattle and sheep and goat may have been slaughtered either within their prime meat age or later. The extremely small sample can be juxtaposed with other rural settlements from which faunal data is available (Fig. 4.38). The extremely small proportion of pig is inconsistent with other rural settlements. However, the high percentage of cattle seems to parallel the situation at Cicău-Sălişte. Both settlements are situated along the edges of large river valleys, giving cattle ample water resources, and both have long periods of occupation.

Structures throughout Roman and Free Dacia indicate animal rearing. A possible fenced enclosure was excavated at Hereclean-Dâmbul Iazului, where two sets of three posts mark a possible entrance or small holding pen (1.5 m x 3.2 m) which could have been used for cattle, goats, sheep or pigs (Matei and Stanciu 2000: 50-51, Figs. 10 and 15). The byre-house at Zalău-Mihai Viteazul is a strong indication of the importance of cattle-raising, since sheep could be kept outside in the winter and pigs form such a small proportion of animal bone assemblages in the countryside of rural Roman period Dacia. Animals are usually penned in modern Transylvania for seven full months, from November to March (Fleure and Evans 1939: 46; Fleure and Pellham 1936: 70-72). The byre-house shows a disposition toward keeping them together in one place through the winter, but it is assumed that they were free to graze nearby during the rest of the year.

Within the empire, there is likely evidence for animal rearing only at villas. Animals are likely to have been kept in the long, narrow buildings found in the *pars rustica* of the villas at Ciumăfaia and Chinteni-Tulgheş. The structure at Chinteni has an interior width of about 4.12 m (Alicu 1994) and the one at Ciumăfaia is 4.30 m wide

(Mitrofan 1973: 136), so both could have been sub-divided into two rows of stalls and a central corridor. The fact that no internal divisions are visible could be explained by post-depositional transformation of wooden partitions.

Overall, it appears animal consumption patterns become largely normalised in the Roman period as compared to the Late Iron Age. Sheep/goat consumption was most variable, but for the most part it appears the diet finds a similar resonance in Germany, both within and outside of the province (*cf.* Fig. 5 in King 1999). It appears to have been shaped mainly by preferences of the standing provincial army rather than Iron Age patterns, with perhaps one exception – Măgura and the subsequent military settlements in the Meseș Gate area appear to have both had high proportions of cattle.

4.5.3. Mining and quarrying

Overall, Transylvania is very rich in mineral resources. The unfortunate consequence of continuous usage into the modern era is that many of the traces of ancient exploitation have been destroyed. The most important evidence of pre-Roman exploitation comes from Valea Florilor in Cluj County, where in 1938 a number of wooden tools related to the exploitation of salt were discovered along with a millstone (Maxim 1971). Although these were originally assigned a La Tène date, recent radiocarbon dating of one of the tools has provided a calibrated date of 1250 BC, placing the cache in the Late Bronze Age (Wollmann and Ciugudean 2005). Far from refuting that the Dacians were mining salt, these tools show that its exploitation was part of a much older tradition.

The Romans invested salt with great value, with salt mines usually falling under imperial control and leased to *conductores salinarum* (Wollmann 1996: 248). Four inscriptions in Roman Dacia indicate indirect imperial administration under these

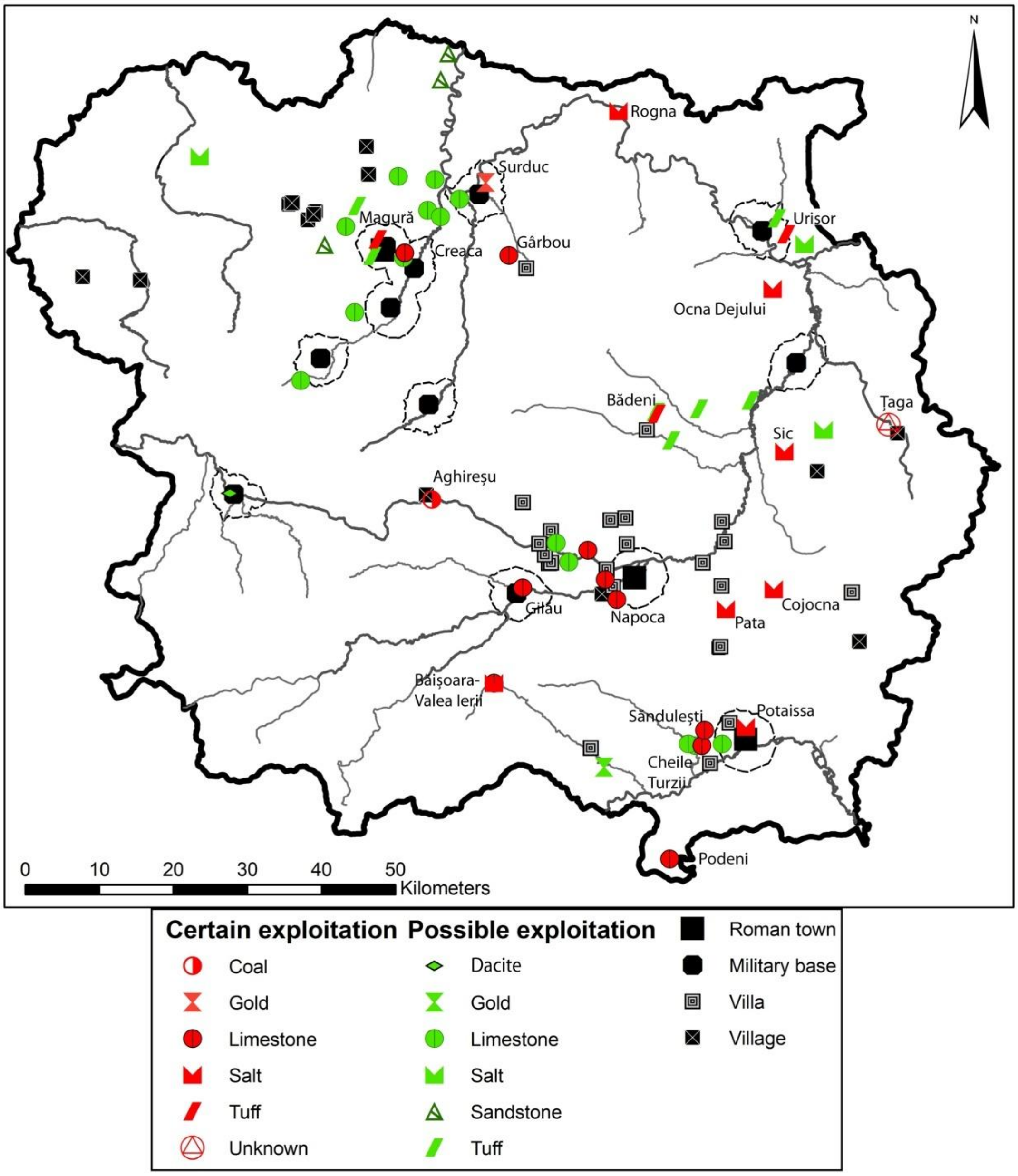


Figure 4.37: Mineral and stone exploitation in relation to nucleated or high-status settlements and major rivers; agricultural territories of larger settlements indicated for reference.

contractors. Three, one from Micia and two from Domneşti, indicate *conductores pascui et salinarum*, suggesting that the named individuals had rights of local administration over salt mines as well as associated pastures (CIL III, 1363; Russu 1956; AE 1937: 141). One inscription from Apulum indicates a *conductor pascui, salinarum et commerciorum*, who appears to have the right to sell or sublease the mines or the products obtained (CIL III, 1309). Since two out of three named individuals with

these positions can be dated to the time of Septimius Severus, a recent article has suggested that before 180 the salt was administered by the military, and afterward by municipal elite (Benea 2007).

Table 4.17: Evidence for ancient rural exploitation of minerals and stone.

Location	Resource	Evidence	Reference
Aghireşu	coal	Roman coins in coal mine	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 20
Baciu	limestone	Roman structures near quarry	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 42
Bădeni	tuff	Roman building material traced back to this quarry	Wollmann 1996: 259
Băişoara	gold/silver	mining tools, Roman stamp, hammers, iron pick-axes, oil lamps near gold resources	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 51; Wollmann 1996: 148-149
Cojocna	salt	'remains of works of Roman exploitation'; bronze brooch in area of mines	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 155-158; Wollmann 1996: 243
Creaca-Piatra Lată	limestone	traces of ancient quarrying; proximity to Porolissum	Wollmann 1996: 440-441
Gârbou	limestone	an inscription (CIL III, 844) has been traced back to this quarry	Wollmann 1996: 261
Gilău-Malu Roşu	limestone	Roman building and inscription material traced to this quarry	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 222; Wollmann 1996: 261
Moldoveneşti	gold (?)	Location of inscription (now lost) mentioning a *legulus aurariarum*	Wollmann 1996: 148
Napoca-Hoia Hill	limestone	Roman building materials at Napoca traced back to this quarry	Wollmann 1996: 261-262
Ocna Dejului	salt	two Roman period plough furrows in proximity to salt exploitation area; nearby settlement at Pitnic	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 298; Wollmann 1996: 243
Pata	salt	Roman and Dacian ceramics, stone relief, Roman coin in proximity to salt exploitation area	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 305-307; Wollmann 1996: 243
Podeni	limestone	Roman coins; stone sarcophagus of Potaissa traced to this quarry	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 315; Wollmann 1996: 262
Rogna	salt	'very significant exploitation of salt from the Roman period'	Wollman 1996: 244
Săndulești-Piatra Tăiată	limestone	extant cut stone, Roman ceramics, tiles, lamps, keys, coins	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 338; Wollmann 1996: 262
Sic	salt	Remains of Roman (?) salt mining observed in 19th century; two quarried stone slabs at entrance of old salt mine	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 351; Wollmann 1996: 243
Surduc	gold	'important remains of gold washing of the Roman period'	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 380
Ţaga	unknown	Iron tools, ceramic lantern, Roman ceramics	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 412
Turda-Potaissa	salt	wooden tools and proximity to town	Wollmann 1996: 242
Urișor	tuff	stone from quarry was identified in the forts of Căşeiu and Ilişua	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 417
Valea Ierii	unknown	'remains of mining of the Roman period'	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 420

Numerous centres for ancient mining and quarrying are interpreted throughout Transylvania based on location, but fewer on real evidence. Table 4.17 and Figure 4.37 indicate locations for which ancient mineral exploitation is certain. All of this evidence favours Roman exploitation since this left more visible and durable traces, but there is nothing to refute that the Dacians were also exploiting these same locations.

The salt mine made Potaissa an important centre in numerous periods of history. While it is certain that the Romans exploited salt here, it is unknown if it was on a scale comparable to other historical periods. Especially notable is that, although stone exploitation is found in close proximity to towns and military bases, mines are generally not with the exception of Potaissa and Surduc. Elsewhere, at Cojocna in the Someş Mic River area, salt exploitation from the Roman period to the medieval period was on such as scale that it left an artificial salt lake; but no traces of substantial settlement are indicated.

Building stone seems to have been extracted wholly from the Roman province. At Porolissum, the single largest consumer of stone in this area of the *limes*, a number of different types of stone were used, including yellow sandstone, grey limestone and white calciferous limestone. Three quarries nearby were probably exploited for the building stone of Porolissum: certainly from Piatra Lată/Ţâcla in Creaca; one at Poguior, near a Roman fortlet; and Cămin Hill near the Citeră fort. The troops stationed away from the base, in addition to patrol, also were responsible for guarding and supervising quarrying activity, and this may have played a role in the disposition of some of the fortifications. In the latest phase of Porolissum, re-use of monuments and building materials indicates that the quarries probably went out of use or at least were in decline in the late second century. Stone from the quarries to the west of Napoca (Hoia Hill) were used to make monuments in the town, but quarries with the same stone are

also found at both Baciu and Suceagu to the east (Wollmann 1996: 261). Clustering of settlements around Cheile Turzii may indicate that the stone quarries in this area were utilised in the building of Potaissa. The stone could have been transported by river through the gorge into the Haşdate River and subsequently into the Arieş which flows west and toward Potaissa.

Wollman (1996: 276-277) has suggested that local quarries may have been exploited as needed and administered privately. After the initial phase of stone building of the towns and forts, further exploitation would have been more in the interest of local leaders seeking to monumentalise their towns, not provincial administrators. This may also be true of the exploitation of mineral resources.

Villa architecture and villages appear in proximity to some exploitation sites. In fact, exploitation may have stimulated the establishment of villages and in some cases the creation of wealthy rural elite. At Aghireşu, for example, a village of over two hectares is known in the area of a coal mine where coins were found. Individual settlements located at Baciu and Cojocna, and a more substantial number of rural settlements which are probably related at Sic also indicate small-scale exploitation which was not directly controlled by a provincial authority. At Băişoara, along the a tributary of the Valea Ierii in the foothills of the Apuseni Mountains, a mining stamp, a hammer, an iron pick-axe and burnt lamps were found, indicating Roman mining activity. Local deposits of silver, lead and iron are known in this area in the modern period. The presence of a burial in the area which could not be dated hints at a possible settlement in the area, though this cannot be proven. There is no indication of any military protection over this – it would have been several hours march away from Potaissa which is the nearest military base.

The fact that no tools for mining and quarrying have been discovered at rural settlements (although some are recorded as isolated finds) in any period can probably be explained by the fact that tools were kept on site, and have been destroyed through centuries of local exploitation. At the Roman quarry of Sănduleşti, from where the stone to build Potaissa was brought, two cavities were recorded which were interpreted as places to deposit tools (Crişan *et al.* 1992: 338). In summary, with a few exceptions (Potaissa, Porolissum) there is very little evidence at all for direct or indirect imperial administration of the stone and mineral resources in Northwest Transylvania, suggesting that most of them were locally controlled either by the military or municipal or rural elite.

4.5.4. Metalwork

Evidence for metalwork in the Late La Tène comes mainly from the hillforts of Şimleu. Processing of silver, iron and bronze is attested at both Observator and Cetate. A structure with replicated Republican *denarii* at Cetate probably indicates centralised production within the region, since Şimleu is the only places where evidence for silverwork is found in Late Iron Age Northwest Transylvania. A number of hoards within the study region also contain Dacian copies. Also at Cetate, a *denarius* of M. Antonius was found which was melted down and then re-solidified, so that both the shape of the casting cone and the connecting canal are visible (Pop 2008: 99). An ingot was also found at the base of the first terrace at Cetate which appears to comprise two *drachmae* (Pop 2008: 97). Also at the nearby hill of Uliul cel Mic three pieces of melted silver were found, showing that metalwork was not confined to the hillfort interior (Pop 2008: 102).

In the Roman period, iron slag is attested at all the towns and military bases, though no centre of production has been identified archaeologically. A fibula workshop has been excavated at Napoca to the east of the forum, for which a monograph publication is eagerly anticipated. Slag is also found at four rural settlements indicating that this industry was not confined only to towns and military bases.

4.5.5. Pottery and tile production

In the Late La Tène, small-scale, domestic pottery production is suggested at the Şimleu hillforts and in their proximity based on excavated kilns (Pop *et al.* 2006: 92). In the Roman period, pottery production is attested at almost every larger settlement and a few rural settlements, both in the province and Free Dacia. Pottery production is attested at all of the major towns, although the evidence is least complete at Potaissa (Catinaş 1997). Kilns have been found in several places at Napoca, but there is no evidence that production was on a level significant enough for major distribution outside of the town's territory (Crişan *et al.* 1992: 139; Rusu-Bolindeţ 2007: 48-51). A workshop producing stamped pottery was particularly active in the first half of the second century to the beginning of the third century, influenced by forms from Pannonia Inferior (Rusu-Bolindeţ 2007: 230-249). A significant percentage of this locally produced pottery (21 per cent of the total) dates to the time of Trajan and Hadrian, indicating that a workshop was probably set up immediately after the Roman conquest. With only a few exceptions, the use of local finewares drops off significantly at the beginning of the third century while the same forms continue to be imported.

At Porolissum, production of similar forms only takes off in the second half of the century, coinciding with the first stone phase of the settlement (Gudea 1980). At Porolissum the production of the fineware *terra sigillata Porolissensis* is attested, which

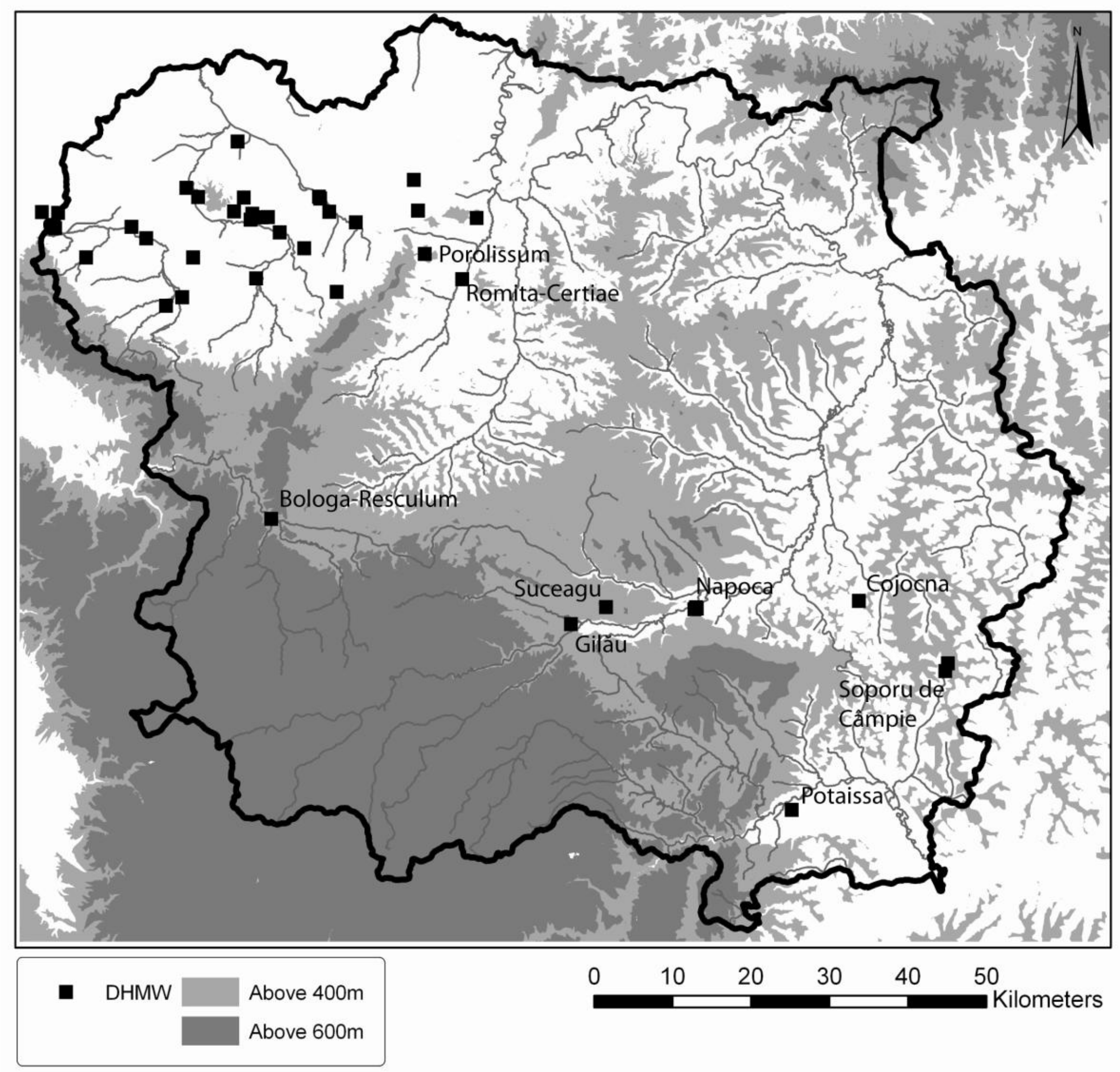


Figure 4.38: Roman period sites with Dacian handmade wares.

was produced until the late third century, if not later (Gudea 1996). In the excavations of the forum, De Sena (forthcoming) has noted that in the second century oxidized local wares, which represent 'Roman' potters comprise about 60 per cent of the assemblage, while gray wares, likely representing native traditions, represent about 20 per cent of the assemblage. In the third century, the presence of *sigillata Porolissensis* is much larger, and ratio of oxidized ware to gray ware levels is much closer (40 per cent and 34 per cent, respectively).

There is nothing especially notable about industry on the regional scale that distinguishes these military bases from any other bases throughout the empire.

However, one feature of the ceramic assemblages is worth discussing further. At present, small amounts of 'Dacian handmade wares' have been found in military contexts: within the study area, at Gilău, Buciumi, Bologa, Romita, and the Porolissum forum, fort, *vicus* and customs house (*cf*. Rusu-Bolindeţ 2007: 102-106 for full bibliography). The presence of these handmade wares indicates a Dacian presence, and though military levies and bribes from a local off-site population cannot be ruled out, we argue for on-site production (see 7.2).

Only at the excavated example of Zalău-Mihai Viteazul Blvd. is there certain evidence for rural ceramic industry (Matei and Stanciu 2000: 86-102). A number of pits lined with clay with clear signs of burning and one kiln were located in the immediate area of the structures. One of the pits, possibly used to fire pottery, was superimposed with a post-built surface structure. Other pits nearby may represent clay extraction, and some wasters from ceramic firing were also found. Kilns at other rural settlements are of similar size but reduced in number, and thus probably only for the level of the household.

Tile production is attested at military bases throughout the province based on stamps, which represent nearly every single unit in Dacia which is also represented on military diplomas (Marcu 2004). Most tiles in Northern Dacia which bear stamps of the same units were discovered in places relatively close to each other. Based on distributions around Porolissum, teams of soldiers were producing tiles.

4.6. Settlement hierarchy and typology

Settlement in Northwest Transylvania was more complex than the traditional division of military/rural/urban (or fort, field and town). At this point it is beneficial to

draw together the evidence presented in this chapter to critique the existing typology of settlement patterns for Roman Dacia.

There are four main systems of classification that have been applied to the settlements of the Late Iron Age in Dacia (Table 4.18). Constraints of functionalism and the regional particularity of the Orăştie Mountains mar the classification systems of Glodariu (1983), Nandris (1976) and Lockyear (2004). Oltean's (2007) study of the Mureş River Valley drew an important distinction between aggregated and individual settlements, but also is focused exclusively on the Mureş Valley area.

The present study has identified (seemingly) isolated hillforts and hillforts surrounded by smaller settlements. Since the same patterning of agglomerated settlements around hillforts appears in the Orăştie Mountains, even with the different settlement architecture and scale, the social organisation was probably similar. In this survey of settlement patterns, the structural framework of Oltean (2007) is preserved, but military centres were also incorporated into this scheme (Table 4.19). The towers, fortlets, forts were integral parts of the complex system of settlement in Northwest Transylvania, and their prolonged study over past centuries provides a solid foundation of knowledge which cannot be ignored when studying the Roman occupation. The distribution of soldiers in small towers and fortlets also represented a distribution of authority which structured the countryside.

There exists no classification of early post-Roman/Migration period settlement. In this survey of settlements we have identified villages, villas and homesteads which continue usage or are re-used in a later period along with new homesteads. In addition, suburban villages were distinguished from 'Roman' villages. This form of settlement appears to eventually take a role of administration in the post-Roman period.

Table 4.18: Existing settlement typologies in Late Iron Age Dacia.

<table>
<tr><th>Nandris (1976)</th><th>Glodariu (1983)</th><th>Lockyear (2004)</th><th colspan="2">Oltean (2007)</th></tr>
<tr><td>-</td><td rowspan="2">Fortified settlements on promontories</td><td>Defended sites without murus dacicus</td><td rowspan="2" colspan="2">Hillfort/fortified site</td></tr>
<tr><td>Fortified sites (with murus dacicus)</td><td>Defended sites with murus dacicus on hilltops or ridges (in the Orăştie Mountains)</td></tr>
<tr><td>-</td><td>(Fortified settlements as proto-urban agglomerations)</td><td>-</td><td colspan="2">Hillfort with associated settlement</td></tr>
<tr><td>Domestic scattered settlements</td><td rowspan="2">Unenclosed settlements and villages in river valleys and along hill slopes</td><td rowspan="4">Undefended rural settlements</td><td rowspan="4">Individual homestead</td><td rowspan="3">Compact, unenclosed village</td></tr>
<tr><td>-</td></tr>
<tr><td>-</td><td>Nucleated mountain settlements on terraces</td></tr>
<tr><td>Upland pastoral sites</td><td>Dispersed mountain settlements</td><td>Scattered, unenclosed village</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Sanctuaries and ritual sites</td><td>-</td><td>Circular sanctuaries</td><td colspan="2">-</td></tr>
<tr><td>-</td><td>Rectangular sanctuaries</td><td colspan="2">-</td></tr>
<tr><td>Industrial sites</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td colspan="2">-</td></tr>
<tr><td>-</td><td>Settlements on islands</td><td>-</td><td colspan="2">-</td></tr>
<tr><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td colspan="2">Tower house</td></tr>
<tr><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td colspan="2">Tower house with associated settlement</td></tr>
</table>

Table 4.19: Settlement classification for Northwest Transylvania.

<table>
<tr><th>Period</th><th>Individual settlement</th><th>Nucleated settlement</th></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Late La Tène</td><td>Hillfort</td><td rowspan="2">Hillfort with associated village</td></tr>
<tr><td>Homestead</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="4">Roman</td><td rowspan="2">Villa</td><td>Major urban centre and military base</td></tr>
<tr><td>Major urban centre</td></tr>
<tr><td>Small military centres (fortlets and towers)</td><td>Military base</td></tr>
<tr><td>Homestead</td><td>Village</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Post-Roman</td><td>Villa</td><td>Suburban village</td></tr>
<tr><td>Homestead</td><td>Village</td></tr>
</table>

Chapter 5: Burial and ritual in Northwest Transylvania

In the analysis of settlement forms and patterns in the previous chapter, a number of practices pertaining to architecture, site layout and land-use were identified which showed changes prior to, during, and after the end of the Roman occupation. Identification of other practices is constrained by ambiguity in recording and sporadic publication in Romanian archaeology. Among only other features which are recorded consistently are the contexts of burials and pit depositions. This chapter takes a close look at these specific categories in order to analyse chronological and spatial variance and continuity in practice across the entire region. The most important question in this regard is whether the Roman conquest annihilated, changed or absorbed Dacian ritual and religion.

5.1. Burial

Different ways of treating the dead reflect different rituals and associated cosmological beliefs. The distribution of burials throughout Northwest Transylvania in some ways reflects varying intensity of archaeological intervention and salvage recording; but also the important relationships between funerary practices and certain regions, settlement types, sizes and chronological periods. While the strong association of burials with Roman forts and towns is certainly the result of disproportionate excavation carried out at these sites, the poor representation of Dacian burials in Northwest Transylvania is not unique to the region. This is characteristic of the Late

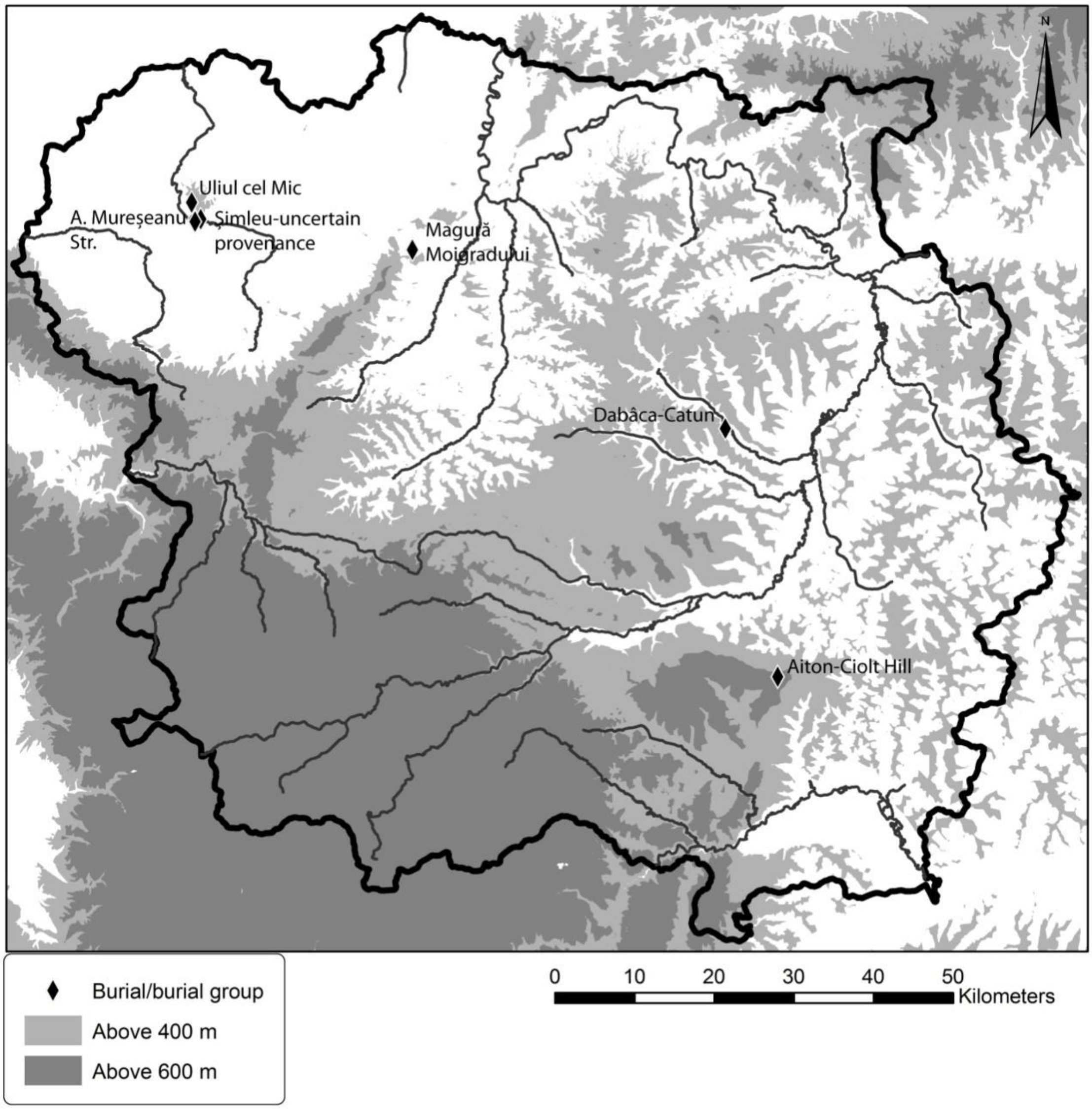


Figure 5.1: Burial evidence for the pre-Roman period with labelled sites mentioned in text.

Iron Age throughout most of Transylvania. In the countryside some burials have been located in Late Iron Age and Roman period Free Dacia, showing that burial (cremation and inhumation) was practiced, if rarely, throughout the area. However, for the most part the Dacian rites of disposing of the dead are archaeologically invisible.

5.1.1. Burials at hillforts

It has been postulated that when the Dacians did practice burial, cremation was the preferred rite (Sîrbu 1993). Across the whole of Romania, very few cases of Dacian

burials have been located. In fact, the only places where 'Dacian' cemeteries are found are outside of Transylvania in rural areas (*e.g.*, Malaia Kopania, Ukraine and Zemplen, Slovakia). A cremation cemetery was found at Medieşul Aurit in Satu Mare to the northwest of the study region which was in use from the end of the first century to the third century AD (Matei and Stanciu 2000: 65-66). This has significantly influenced interpretation of Dacian burial rites in Northwest Transylvania, but it reflects a treatment of the dead which may be different from most pre-Roman patterns. Within Transylvania, the Late La Tène rite of burial appears closely but not exclusively associated with hillforts (Fig. 5.1).

The only remains of burial practice at hillforts in the study area have been found near at Şimleu (Table 5.1). Three out of four of these burials have been interpreted as such on the basis of finds accessioned in the Zalău Museum, and not on systematic excavation. Nevertheless, all of these finds can be traced to the slopes of the Şimleu Hills. These instances appear to confirm a pattern of burial location at other hillforts noticed by Popa (2008): Dacian burials tend to be located outside fortified areas but on the slopes of the inhabited hills, as at Cugir, Craiva, Coteşti, Ardeu, Piatra Craivii and Piatra Roşie. This appears to be a preference which is common throughout Transylvania, and almost certainly indicates that the individuals contained in such burials held a special social and political relationship to the hillfort. Weapons, sometimes bent or broken, brooches and coins from Greece and Rome in these inventories suggest some of these individuals wanted to give the impression of important social connections. In these burials, the upper echelon of society appears to be over-represented, perhaps indicating a prerequisite for burial.

Table 5.1: Cremation burials in the Şimleu area

Location	Burial vessel	Burial inventory	References
Şimleu-Uliul cel Mic	unknown	three brooches; a silver torque; four silver bracelets; one bronze bracelet; 50 Republican *denarii* (99 BC to AD 11)	Pop 2007: 71-76; Pop and Bancea 2004: 196-197
Şimleu-St. Mihai Eminescu, nr. 12 (Orhegy)	wooden box(?)	iron spearhead; one iron brooch; two iron clasps; one *drachma* of Apollonia; one bronze appliqué; one iron chain link; iron nail(s?); handmade wares; wheelmade mug	Pop 1999b; Pop and Bancea 2004: 197-198
Şimleu-St. Mihai Eminescu, nr. 12 (Orhegy)	unknown	glass beads; corroded iron objects; handmade wares	Pop 1999b; Pop and Bancea 2004: 197-198
Şimleu-Unknown location	unknown	two spearheads; one blade; boss (w/ shield handle); buckle	Matei and Stanciu 2000: 82

The most intriguing evidence attested at hillforts is the deposition of human remains, which can in only two cases be called inhumations (Table 5.2). In most of these instances the remains are disarticulated without apparent signs of burning. These depositions are frequently made in rounded pits which are of similar shape, location, and size to ritual pits which are discussed below (see 5.2). The small number and strange circumstances surrounding all of these human remains demonstrates that these were not typical burials for the Late La Tène. Because a majority of these pits are so similar to ritual pits without traces of human bones, these are considered amongst other classes of ritual deposition.

Parallels are rare in Transylvania. The only time inhumation seems to have been practiced as a norm rather than an exception is in the case of children. At Hunedoara, where 16 children were buried, however, not one of them resembles the child at Şimleu. These were placed in shallow natural voids in the hillslope with diverse inventories but few ceramics (Sîrbu *et al.* 2006**)**. The closest parallel may be the burial of human crania which has been noted at the Roman period cemetery of Apulum (Dragotă 2004). However, these burials were among a large and heavily utilised cemetery of over 300 burials, as opposed to a few dispersed instances.

Table 5.2: Pits with human remains. After data from Pop and Bancea 2004.

Location	Content	Pottery	Animal bone	Other inventory
Măgura- G5b/1984	upper portion of female	+		beaded necklace; iron pendant; two silver pendants
Măgura- G16/1989	one human phalanx bone		+	none
Măgura- G4/1993	two adult females; one adult male		+	none
Măgura- G5/1993	leg bones of adult male	+	+	none
Şimleu-A. Mureşeanu St.	child with crushed cranium	+		none
Şimleu-Observator	human cranium	+		none

There may be several reasons for this rare practice, including the practice of human sacrifice as Pop and Bancea (2004) have argued. Pending on further contextual information provided by new excavations, a very likely explanation for both the presence of these pits and the general lack of Dacian burials throughout Transylvania is the practice of excarnation, wherein the deceased individual's flesh and organs are removed either by exposure or deliberate butchery. The fate of the bones could vary, but in this instance, some appear to have been deposited in ritual pits. There are three reasons why this is likely. First of all, most Dacian cremation burials are associated with rich assemblages, indicating that this was primarily reserved for the top stratum of society. Second, the deposition of disarticulated remains, especially ones that cannot be separated easily without a period of decomposition (*e.g.*, upper portion of cranium, or the upper portion of the body) is usually associated with excarnation in other parts of Europe (*e.g.*, Scott 1992 for Neolithic Britain). Finally, the inclusion of specific human and animal bones in pits which appear to have been utilised for ritual purposes does not seem as if it was intended as a means of disposing of the dead, but rather a variation of a ritual (see 5.2). This would imply that individuals had some access to human bones for these purposes.

While remaining uncertain without further excavated examples, excarnation seems to be a likely solution for all of the problems associated with pre-Roman burial

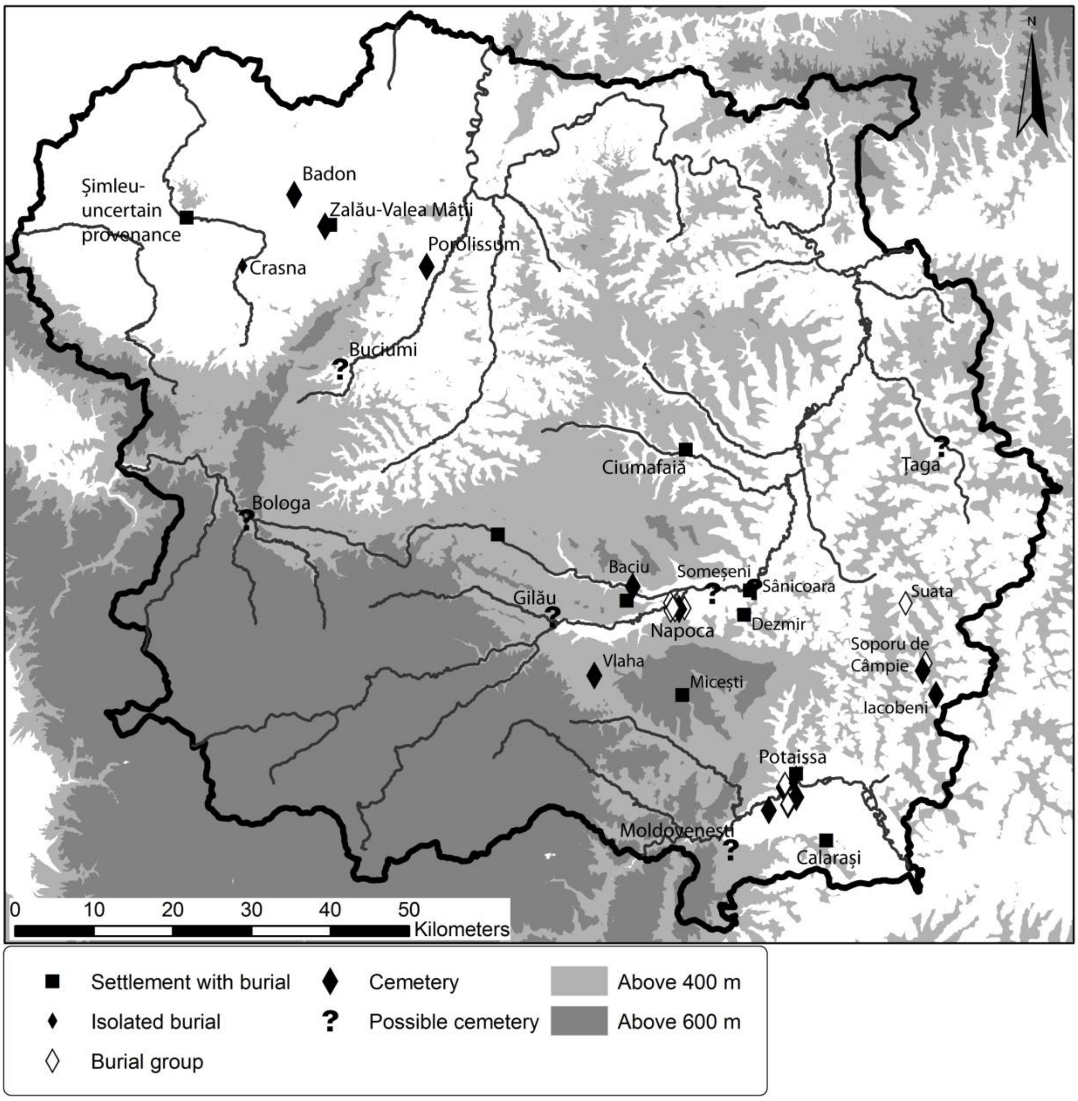


Figure 5.2: Burial evidence for the Roman period with labelled sites in text.

practices. If it is indeed the case, then the shift to burial as the dominant form of disposal of the dead across all social strata should have been a harsh and jarring change to the social order.

5.1.2. Urban and military burial

In contrast to the Late Iron Age, the Roman occupation of Dacia brought with it a completely new set of rituals for treating the dead. The most extensive knowledge we have of these practices is mainly focused on the urban and military contexts, but these

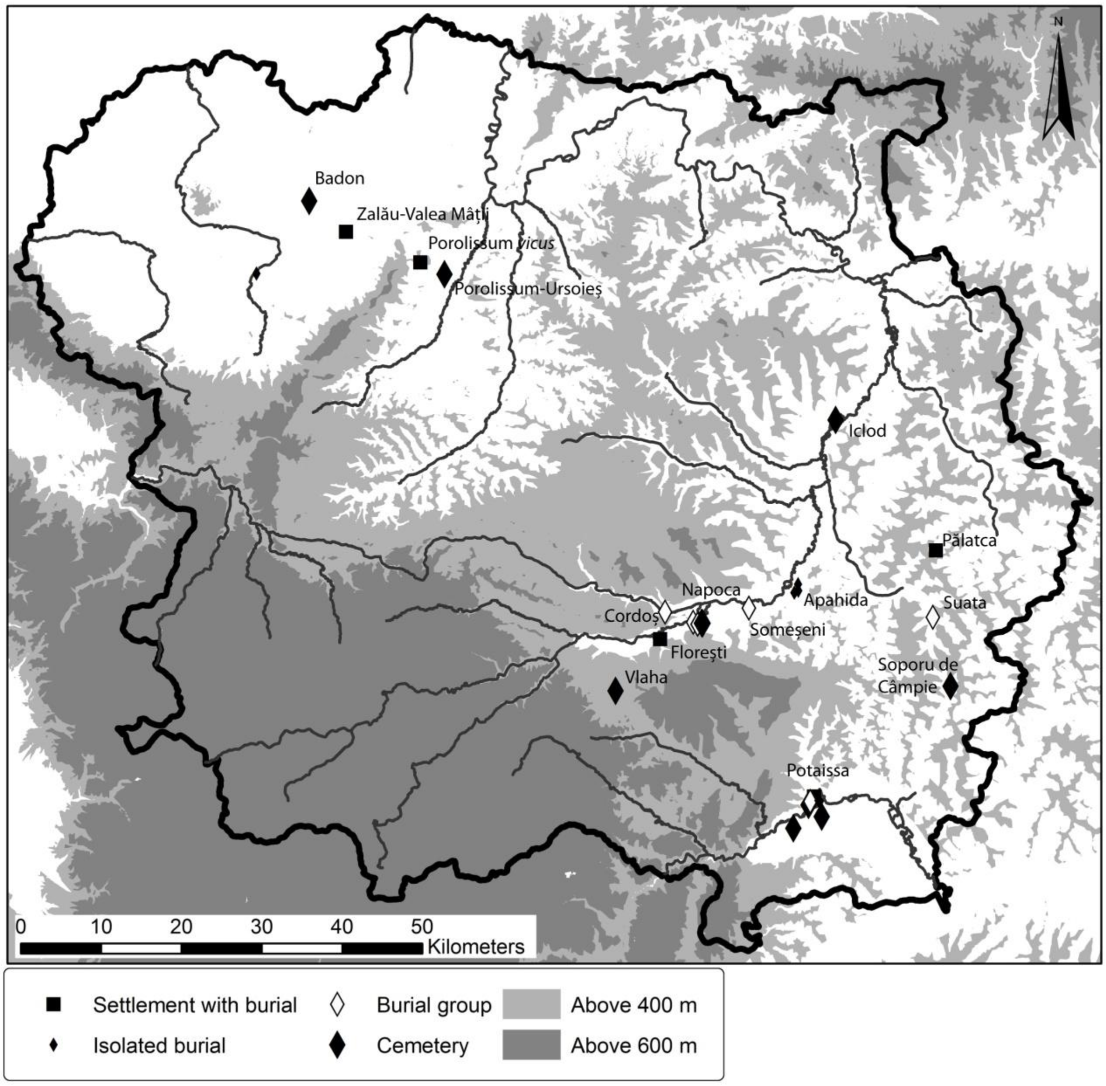


Figure 5.3: Burial evidence for the post-Roman period with labelled sites in text.

are far from complete. Even with current knowledge, we can demonstrate a patchwork of different ways of treating the dead both within and between the towns and regions of Roman Dacia.

The main focus of work at Porolissum has been the cemetery at Ursoieş Hill (Moga 1950: 133; Gudea 1989: 148-150; Macrea *et al.* 1961: 380-384; Gudea 1989: 148-155; Gudea *et al.* 2009: 152-154; Gudea *et al.* 2008: 203-204; Alföldy-Găzdac *et al.* 2007) (Fig. 5.4). Fieldwalking and geophysics have determined that most, if not all, of the hill was covered by a Roman cemetery full of cremation burials. So far five

different burial types have been excavated (burial references refer to numbering in Gudea 1989 and Gudea *et al.* 2009):

- One or more rectangular cremation burials contained in a circular and rectangular stone enclosure of Mala Kopašnica-Sase type I: M1-4/2007
- Rectangular or oval *bustum*-type cremation burials (cremation took place over the grave): ME2/2008; ME4/2008; MJ1/2008
- Cremation burials in urns placed in pits (*Urnengraben*): M7/1958; M17/1958; M20/1958; MH1/2008
- Cremations burials in oval/rectangular pits with signs of burning prior to the deposition of the ashes: M6/1958; M7/1958; M9/1958; M11/1958; M13/1958; M18/1958; M21-23/1958; M25/1958; M29/1958; MJ1/2008
- Cremation burials deposited in rectangular/oval pits (*Brandschüttungsgräber*): ME1/2008; MI1-3/2008; MJ12-19/2008

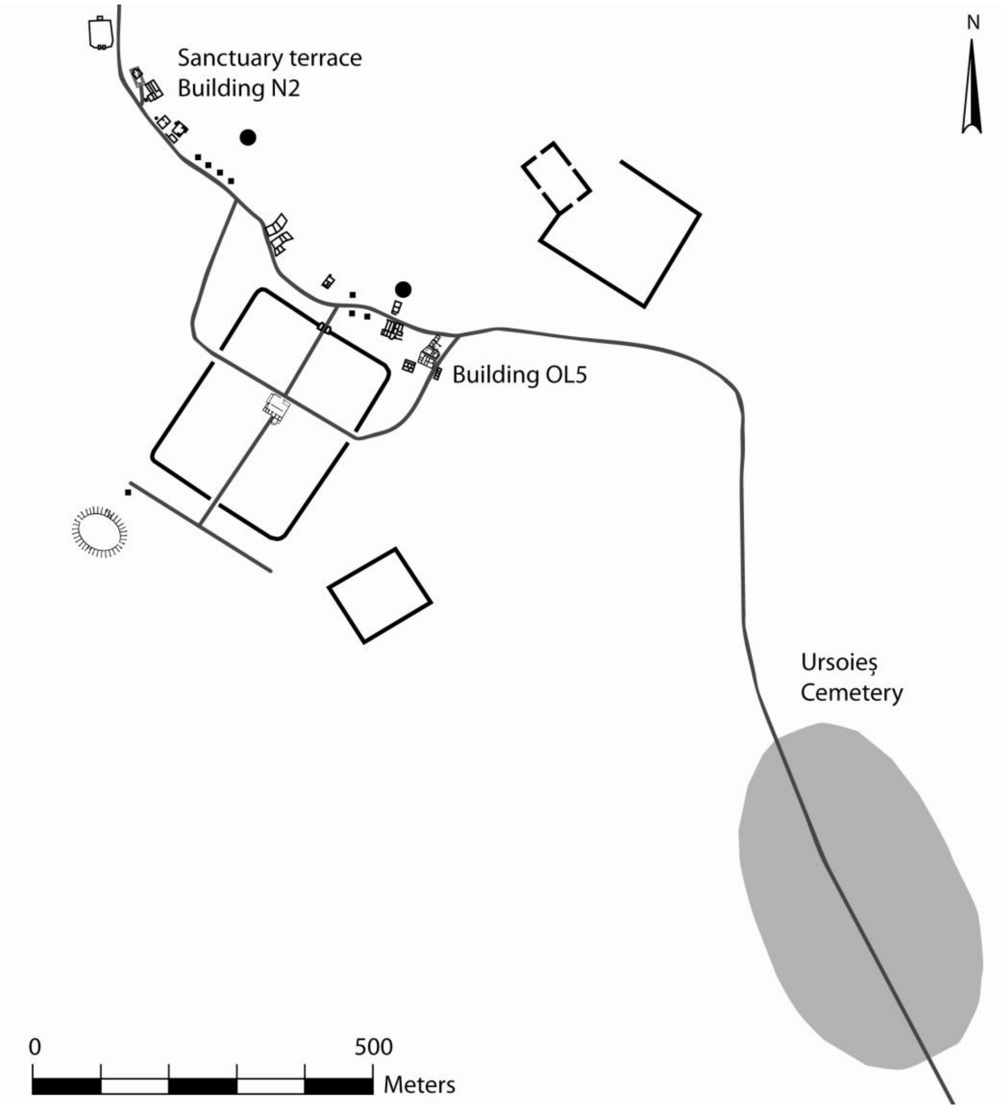


Figure 5.4: Location of cemetery and other burials at Porolissum

Table 5.3: Relevant urban burials at Porolissum (I=Inhumation, C=Cremation; R=Roman, PR=Post-Roman)

Location	Type	Period	Container	Inventory
OL5/1914	I	PR	brick sarcophagus (6), none (12)	none
Area OL/2008	I	PR	communal pit (19 bodies)	none
Ursoieş Hill/1958	C	R	rectangular or oval pit, no container (18), urn in pit (3), unknown (6)	ceramics, lamps, iron spike, coins (Hadrianic), glass, gold earrings, bronze fibula
Ursoieş Hill/2007	C	R	rectangular pit in stone enclosure (3)	pottery, glass, ceramic lamp (?)
Ursoieş Hill/2008	C	R	urn in circular pit (15)	ceramics and lamps
	C	R	rectangular pit with no container/*bustum* (2)	ceramics and lamps

Macrea (1961: 384) believed that two burials he excavated were inhumations based on their shape and size, although only teeth remained due to heavy disturbance, but given that no other inhumations have been found in the cemetery after several seasons of systematic excavation this interpretation is uncertain.

Two stone enclosures indicate an Illyrian connection, significant in that no inscriptions at Porolissum indicate Illyrian names (Alföldy-Găzdac *et al.* 2007: 11-12). One circular stone enclosure contained a thin layer of charcoal and bones spread throughout the whole pit, representing a ritual purification of the area before the placement of the human remains. Another possible instance of a stone enclosure was found in 1958 (M15/1958). Although it was recorded only as a semicircular wall, part of it may have been robbed or the full extent of it not uncovered.

Many smaller pits had burnt sides or clear layers of ash at the foundations (Gudea 1989: 155). This probably represents a rite of burning associated with dedicating or purifying the pit prior to the deposit of the ashes. In some cases, only a few parts of the walls or the bottom of the pit showed signs of burning (M9/1958; M13/1958). A majority are oriented northeast-southwest, but a few were not. Various burials markers were noted. Besides the visible stone enclosure, the enclosed graves appear to have been marked with stones standing on a pedestal. One of the circular

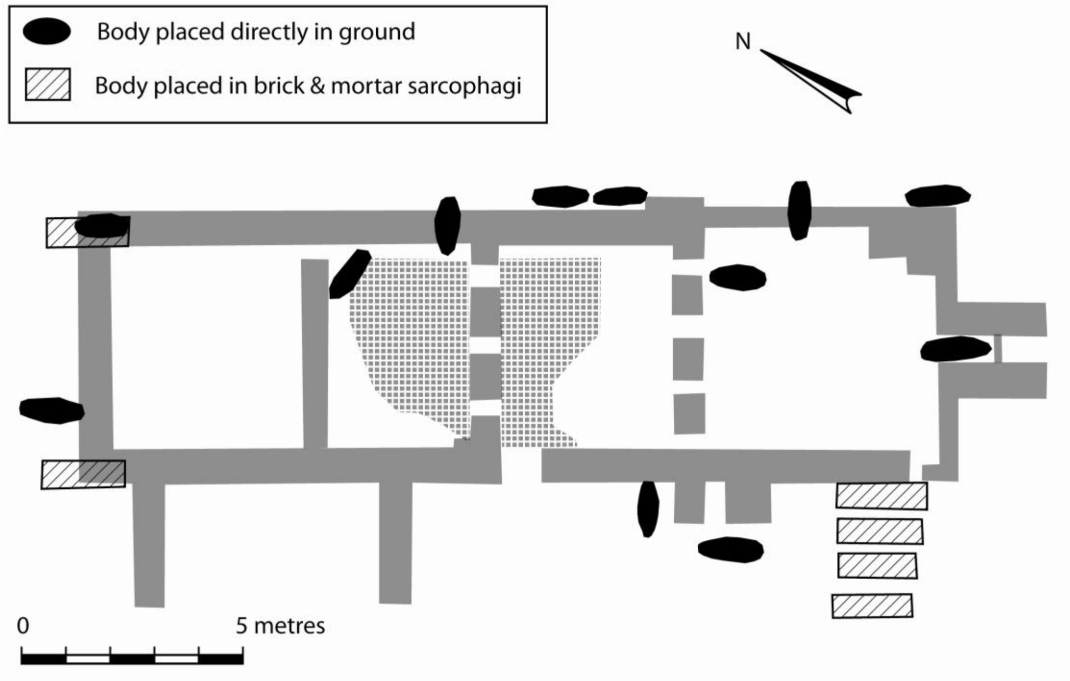


Figure 5.5: Burials in Building OL5 at Porolissum. After Gudea 1989: Fig. 49.

shaped cremation burials was marked with a sandstone slab stood upright against the burial wall, protruding from the burial itself (ME1). A massive rectangular platform supported a funerary altar and decorations in another case (MJ1-9). The latest (probably post-Roman) burials of the cemetery are marked by a rectangular platform comprising re-used hypocaust bricks, likely supporting a funerary monument (MJ10-19).

The evidence for the latest phase of burials has been found in the Roman *vicus* (Fig. 5.5). 18 inhumation burials were discovered in the ruins of building OL5 (Gudea 1989: 157-158). Six of them were inside sarcophagi constructed with bricks and mortar, and the others were placed directly in the ground. None contained any inventory but the burials were originally assigned a post-Roman date because of their stratigraphic relationship and their resemblance to post-Roman burials in other towns like Potaissa (Gudea 1989: 342; Matei 1979: 478). Horedt (1982: 68-69) argued that a medieval date was more likely since medieval structures were found nearby. In 2008, excavations in the proximity of this building revealed a stone cist made with blocks of re-used

sandstone and a mass burial where at least 19 bodies were discovered (Gudea *et al.* 2008: 153). All of the skeletons were oriented northwest-southeast and there was no burial inventory. Although interpreted as medieval, subsequent excavations have not confirmed this, and we cannot rule out a late Roman/post-Roman date.

At Potaissa a large cemetery is located along the Roman road to the south of the river Arieş, attested by salvage excavations and chance finds of burials, sarcophagi, and funerary monuments (Table 5.4; Fig. 5.6). This large necropolis has been broadly divided into southern and western areas. The southern area consists primarily of the points of Cazărmi, Uzina de Apă, Râtul Sânmihăienilor and the bridge across the Arieş River, while the western area consists of finds at Şuia Hill and Zânelor Hill (Crişan *et al.* 1992: 400-402). Inhumations are over-represented since stone and brick sarcophagi are more durable materials. A few funerary urns have been recovered, but their context was not recorded with the exception one at Uzina de Apă. Inhumations in the Potaissa cemeteries are represented by rectangular stone sarcophagi, trapezoidal stone sarcophagi, sarcophagi of re-used stone from monuments or buildings and rectangular brick sarcophagi. Rectangular stone sarcophagi are most numerous, and although a precise count is not possible due to recording methods of older excavations and chance finds, well over 40 are attested. Second in quantity to this are the sarcophagi constructed of bricks, usually assigned a late Roman or post-Roman date based on their inventories. Finally, a very small number of trapezoid-shaped stone sarcophagi have been recovered, which are frequently assigned a post-Roman date based on parallels with other areas (at Târgu Mureş, Popa 2001: 48; at Napoca and Callatis, Wolski 1971). For the few which have been properly excavated, the sarcophagi have been placed along the same orientations though not always in the same direction.

Table 5.4: Relevant urban burials at Potaissa. Containers: BR = body set into building ruins; BS = rectangular sarcophagus constructed of re-used brick and tiles; RS = rectangular stone sarcophagus; TS= trapezoidal stone sarcophagus; UR = urn; US = urn placed in stone box

Location	Type	Period	Container	Inventory	Reference
Arieş bridge (nr. 13)	I	PR	BS	silver crossbrow brooch	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 401
Bodoc/1885-89 (nr. 22)	I	R	RS (24)	?	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 402
Căzarmi (nr. 20)	I	R	RS (15)	?	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 402
	I	R/PR	BS (8)	coins, including Lucilla and Gordian III	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 402
Cetate – bath complex (nr. 7)	I	PR	BR	gold rings, silver brooch, silver buckle, amber beads, embroidery beads, bone comb, mirror, silver shoe buckles	Bărbulescu *et al.* 1997
Cetate – *principia* (nr. 6)	I	PR	BR	iron knife, iron belt buckle, bronze belt buckle, flint steel, lead sheet	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 396-397
Drumul Bădenilor	I	R/PR	RS, BS (5 total)	ceramics, coins of Commodus and Severus Alexander	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 402
Highway from Turda to Abrud (nr. 23)	I	R	RS (?)	?	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 402
Şuia Hill/1860 (nr. 19)	I	R/PR	RS	?	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 401
Şuia Hill/1837 (nr. 19)	I	R/PR	BS	gold earrings	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 401
Şuia Hill/1911 (nr. 19)	I	R/PR	RS, BS (?)	?	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 401
Şuia Hill/1951-57 (nr. 19)	I	R	RS (2)	?	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 401
	I	R/PR	BS (5)	?	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 401
Oprişani	I	R	RS	?	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 403
Piaţa Libertăţii	I	R	RS	gold earrings, denarius of Caracalla	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 398
Piaţa Libertăţii, A1	I	R/PR	BS	none	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 399
Raţiu St.	I	R/PR	BS (?)	?	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 398
Râtul Sânmihaienilor	I	R	RS (3)	coin of Trajan (?)	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 402
St. John's Well	I	R/PR	BS	bone needle, coin of Commodus, earring with rod-shaped pendants	Horedt 1982: 64
Uzina de Apă/1969 (nr. 21)	I	R/PR	TS (2)	none	Milea *et al.* 1978
	I	R/PR	BS	iron nails (for wood box), bronze spatula, slate plaque	Milea *et al.* 1978
	I	R	RS	none	Milea *et al.* 1978
	C	R/PR	US	*dupondius* of Commodus, silver crossbow-shaped fibula	Milea *et al.* 1978
Uzina de Apă/1978	I	R/PR	RS (5)	ceramics, bronze needle, silver fibula, *Herculeskeule* pendant	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 402
	I	R/PR	BS (10)		Crişan *et al.* 1992: 402

Location	Type	Period	Container	Inventory	Reference
Zânelor Hill (nr. 17)	I	R/PR	BS (?)	?	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 400
	C	R	UR (?)	?	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 400
	I	R	RS	?	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 400

Cremation is represented by a single excavated example of an urn placed within a small rectangular stone box and the chance find of a funerary urn on Zânelor Hill. The urn within the small stone box was found at Uzina de Apă, where excavations also revealed two trapezoidal sarcophagi, a brick sarcophagus, a stone sarcophagus and a (Milea *et al.* 1978). None of these burials overlapped so markers were present. While the burials were arranged along similar axes, they were oriented in different directions, some northwest-southeast and others northeast-southwest.

The Roman cemetery continued to be used in the late third and fourth centuries. Within the cremation burial at Uzina de Apă there was a crossbow-shaped brooch dating to the late third century alongside a *dupondius* of Commodus (Milea *et al.* 1978: 201-208). Artefacts dating to the post-Roman period were also found in the inventories of the other burials at Uzina de Apă and at the modern bridge across the Arieş. Sporadic finds of brick sarcophagi in the western necropolis may suggest later usage of this area as well (Crişan *et al.* 1992: 400, 401). Very few of the brick sarcophagi contained burial goods. This could be a result of looting, but brick sarcophagi at Porolissum and many of them at Napoca also did not contain inventories.

While continuity of burial space is certain into the fourth century, there is a significant break in the fifth century. Within the fortress, a male adult burial was found with an iron belt buckle, a flint-steel, and a lead sheet, dating to the second half of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century (Crişan *et al.* 1992: 396-397; Bărbulescu 1982: 137-142). A fifth century female inhumation was also discovered between the

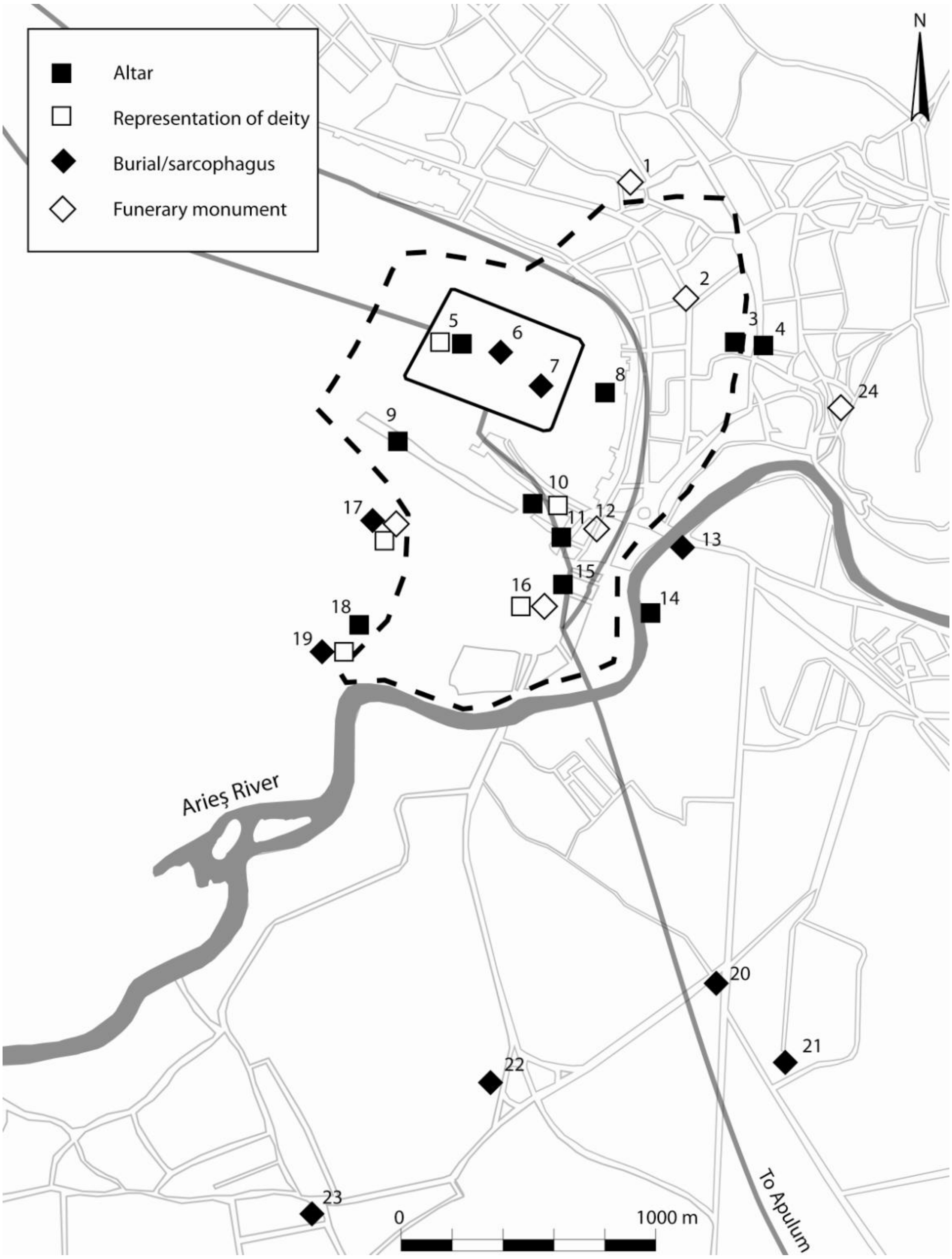


Figure 5.6: Location of burials and evidence for spiritual life at Potaissa. Burial numbers refer to Table 5.4 and altars and representations to the following: 3) Altar to IOM; 4) Altar to Silvanus Domesticus; 5) Altar to Silvanus, bronze Liber statuette, terracotta Sabiazus statuette, Bacchic relief ; 8) Altars to Men and Jupiter; 9) Altars to IOM and Mithras; 10) Altar to Silvanus Domesticus and Mars statuette; 11) Altar to Silvanus; 14) Altar to IOM; 15) Five uninscribed altars; 16) Votive tablet representing Liber and Libera, Venus statuette; 17) Priapus statuette; 18) Altar to Saturn and Latona, Saturn statue; 19) Relief of Liber

secondary canal and the *frigidarium* of the legionary baths inside the fortress with gold rings, silver brooches, a silver buckle, amber beads, embroidery beads, a bone comb, a mirror and silver shoe buckles (Bărbulescu 1999: 431-433). The location of both of these burials may be related to the roads in the fortress: the *principia* is at the terminus of the *via praetoria* and the bath complex to its southwest. Their location in a former living space, the absence of formal sarcophagi, their conspicuous locations and their rich inventories indicate a marked differentiation in treatment of the dead, associated almost certainly with special socio-political status.

At Napoca, a large Roman cemetery is present to the south of the town on both sides of the road which turns to the east (Fig. 5.7). Burial traditions seem similar to those at Potaissa, except that only a single published cremation burial excavated at Napoca can be attributed to the Roman or immediately post-Roman periods. Inhumation burials are represented by types similar to those at Potaissa: rectangular stone sarcophagi, trapezoidal stone sarcophagi, sarcophagi of re-used stone from monuments or buildings and rectangular brick sarcophagi. In addition, a few burials were made with the bodies placed directly in ground, representing the Sântana de Mureş type of burial. Only one *in situ* cremation burial in an urn was found.

A major section of the cemetery was excavated in two campaigns, uncovering 136 burials that remain incompletely published. From the limited information available from existing publications (Crişan *et al.* 1992: 137; Hica 1999; Hica and Pop 1994; Hica-Cîmpeanu 1999; Horedt 1982: 90-94), it is known that except for one, all of the burials were inhumations placed in sarcophagi of either stone, brick, tile or a combination of the three materials. A group of 26 burials dates to the tenth and 11th centuries based on inventories. Many of the ones dated as Roman and post-Roman, based on parallel forms and stratigraphy, had no inventory. Sarcophagi constructed of

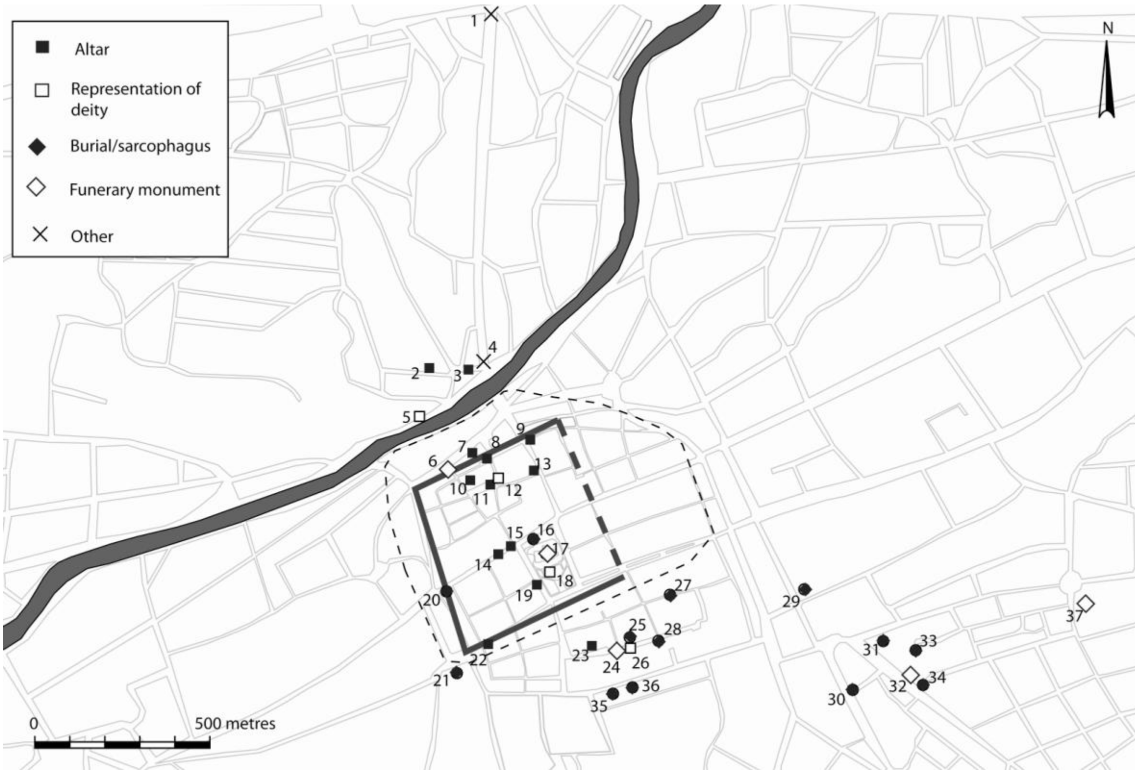


Figure 5.7: Location of burials and evidence for spiritual life at Napoca. Burial numbers refer to Table 5.5 and altars and representations to the following: 2) Altar to Liber Pater; 3) Altar to Bonus Puer, two uninscribed altars; 5) White marble statue of Diana; 7) Liber marble statue group; 8) Altar to Silvanus Domesticus; 9) Altar to IOM and Silvanus; 10) Altar to Silvanus Domesticus; 11) Altar fragment; 12) Statue of Liber Pater; 13) Altar to Silvanus Domesticus; 14) Altar to Dea Syria; 15) Altars to Silen and Dionysus; 18) Statuette of Hercules; 19) Altar to German divinity(?); 22) Altar to IOM; 23) Altar fragment; 26) Statuettes of Priapus and Silvanus

re-used stone from monuments and buildings probably indicates a late third or fourth century date, when the town appears to have been in decline. The occurrence of only one cremation burial within this concentration argues strongly that there was a real difference between burial rituals at Napoca and Porolissum, where all the Roman period burials discovered thus far are cremations. Furthermore, there seems to have been less real variation in burial ritual, as only a small percentage were not buried in sarcophagi of stone or re-used stone.

Table 5.5: Urban burials at Napoca. Containers: BS = sarcophagus constructed with re-used bricks and/or tiles; NO = no container/placed directly in ground; RE = stone sarcophagus of re-used stone monuments or building materials; RS = rectangular stone sarcophagus; SS = grave lined with stone slabs; TS = trapezoidal stone sarcophagus; UN = uncertain; UR = urn

Location	Type	Period	Container	Inventory	References
Avram Iancu St./1914 (nr. 35)	I	R	RS	two gold earrings, one bronze coin	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 135
	I	PR	RE	none	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 135
Avram Iancu St./1927 (nr. 36)	I	R/PR	BS	?	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 135
	I	R/PR	RE	one bone pin, three bronze pins	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 135
	I	R	RS	?	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 135
Casa de Cultură (nr. 21)	I	R	RS (2)	ring with gem	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 133
Gheorgheni/Brancuşi St. (nr. 34)	I	R	RS (5)	bone pin	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 137
Kogălniceanu St./1974 (nr. 28)	I	R	RS (2)	none	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 134
	I	R/PR	RE	iron nails	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 134
	I	PR	RS	gold earrings, bronze coin	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 134
Kogălniceanu St.-University (nr. 25)	I	R	RS (4)	?	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 135
Kogălniceanu St.-Unknown context	I	R/PR	RE (3)	?	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 135
Landwirtschaftlichen-Vereines bldg.	I	R	RS	bronze *sestertius*, lamp, vase	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 144
	I	R	SS	gold earring with cameo, glass pearl, vase	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 144
Memorandul St. (nr. 20)	I	PR	NO (3)	bone comb, buckle	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 126
Piaţa Ştefan cel Mare (nr. 29)	I	R/PR	RE (3)	none	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 136
Piaţa Unirii (nr. 16)	I	R	RS	?	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 127
Plugarilor/ Dovostoievski St./1933 (nr. 33)	I	R	RS (4)	?	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 137
	I	R/PR	TS	?	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 137
Racoviţa St.	I	R	RS (1)	?	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 132
Reşita St.	I	R	RS	?	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 136
Titulescu and Brancuși St./"Plugarilor cemetery" (nr. 31)	I	R/PR	RS (13), BS (23), RE (6), NO (1), UN (66)	?	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 137
	C	R	UR (?)	?	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 137
V. Babeş St.	I	R	RS (2)	?	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 133
Unknown/1867	I	R	RS (2)	broken lamp	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 148

At least 52 burials can be attributed to the late third century or post-Roman phase of Napoca on the basis of techniques which are normally dated to this period: the manufacture of sarcophagi from stone monuments (15) or bricks and mortar (24) and trapezoid-shaped (2) sarcophagi. One of them found along Avram Iancu Street

(formerly Petöfi Street) contained four pins typical of fourth century burials (Hica-Cîmpeanu 1977: 221-228). This sarcophagus was made of a hollowed-out *cippus* and included a Christian cross inscribed into the former Roman monument. It is also notable that a number of these burials are oriented east-west (Horedt 1982: 92). Three burials have also been recorded which display characteristics of the Sântana de Mureş-Černjachov culture (body placed directly in ground, bone comb in inventory), associated with the post-Roman population of Transylvania (Vlassa 1970: 529-531).

5.1.3. Burial in the countryside

The paucity of pre-Roman burials in Northwest Transylvania and its implications have already been discussed, but the limited evidence suggests that the practice of burial was one of the most important changes in the Roman period. The practice of cremation, where burial evidence exists, dominates the countryside in the Roman period (Table 5.6). In previous decades, this phenomenon has been viewed as a survival of Dacian funerary practice in the Roman period: while the towns increasingly practiced inhumation in stone sarcophagi, the remaining population in the countryside attempted to carry on with life as they had before the Romans arrived (*cf.* Protase 1976). Besides the fact that we do not have enough evidence about pre-Roman treatment of the dead, all of the cremation burials which are represented in Northwest Transylvania appear to be associated with the upper echelon of society. Only two burials dated to the Late La Tène have been located outside the vicinity of hillforts in the study region (Table 5.7). The inventory of the one at Aiton is similar to those found around the hillforts and probably indicates an individual of some social standing (Crişan *et al.* 1992: 22). We could easily speculate cremation burials without grave goods being overlooked. However, a few examples of inhumations of the pre-Roman Iron Age exist

as well, as demonstrated above, though these are restricted to areas in or around hillforts. Thus, even using this limited evidence, the idea of the Romans introducing inhumation or the Dacians resisting it does not hold up.

Table 5.6: Rural burial types by period

Period	Type	Roman Empire	Free Dacia	Total
Late Iron Age	Cremation burials	2	0	2
	Inhumation burials	0	0	0
	Total	2	0	2
Roman	Cremation burials	168	11	179
	Inhumation burials	28	0	28
	Total	196	11	207
Post-Roman	Cremation burials	5	6	11
	Inhumation burials	26	0	26
	Total	31	6	37

In Northwest Transylvania, when burial was practiced in the countryside, cremation appears to be the preferred burial rite from prehistoric to Roman times (Table 5.7). A single burial group at the modern village of Badon serves to illustrate the unity of burial patterns throughout communities of the pre-Roman and Roman period. Systematic excavation from 1987 to 1989 revealed Slavic dwellings, complexes from the medieval period and four Roman period cremation burials (Matei and Stanciu 2000: 28-30, Annex 1). A striking feature of the layout of this burial group is the spacing between the burials. A relatively large surface was investigated which revealed only four burials. The greatest distance between the dispersed burials is 27 meters. In general, the individuals were buried with a standard array of arms and armour. While the inventories were similar, the methods of depositing the remains were not: one or two used funerary urns, one used a wooden box (of which only finely-crafted bronze appliqués and 46 bronze rivets remained) and in another the remains were placed directly in the ground. A fragment of a Przeworsk vase (associated with the region north of Transylvania) indicates a date between the beginning of the second century and the

mid-fourth century AD. The inclusion of brooches and spearheads in burials at Badon, Crasna and Zalău is reminiscent of the Late La Tène cremation burials around Şimleu, which may indicate the presence of a surviving group of the Dacian social elite dwelling in the countryside of Free Dacia.

Table 5.7: Individual or grouped rural cremation burials (excl. Soporu de Câmpie)

Location	Period	Burial vessel	Inventory	Reference
Aiton-Dealul Ciolţ	Late La Tène	unknown	bronze brooch; bronze buckle	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 22
Badon-Doaşte M1	2^{nd}-4^{th} c.	ceramic urn	two spearheads; two iron blades; Przeworsk vase; bowl (2?)	Matei and Stanciu 2000: 29-30
Badon-Doaşte M2	2^{nd}-4^{th} c.	wooden box	iron blade; bronze brooch; bronze chain link; bronze needle	Matei and Stanciu 2000: 30
Badon-Doaşte M3	2^{nd}-4^{th} c.	urn (?)	one spearhead; iron blade; iron boss; bronze vase; ceramic vase	Matei and Stanciu 2000: 30
Badon-Doaşte M4	2^{nd}-4^{th} c.	none	two spearheads handle of knife iron boss	Matei and Stanciu 2000: 30
Ciumăfaia	2^{nd}-3^{rd} c.	none		Mitrofan 1973: 135
Crasna-Valea Ratinului	2^{nd}-4^{th} c.	unknown	one spearhead; iron boss; bronze brooch; spindle whorl	Matei and Stanciu 2000: 42
Dăbâca-Cătun	La Tène	ceramic urn	metal fragments	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 178
Someşeni (4)	5^{th} c.	unknown	silver fibula; three silver earrings; glass	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 362
Zalău-Dealul Lupului M1	2^{nd} c.	urn	iron spearhead; iron pendant (?)	Matei *et al.* 2004
Zalău-Dealul Lupului M2	2^{nd} c.	urn		Matei *et al.* 2004
Zalău-Dealul Lupului M3	2^{nd} c.	urn	iron brooch; carbonised wood	Matei *et al.* 2004
Zalău-Dealul Lupului M4	2^{nd} c.	urn	iron boss; three iron spearheads; iron arrowhead; handle of shield; iron pendant; bowl	Matei *et al.* 2004
Zalău-Dealul Lupului M5	2^{nd} c.	none	*lorica squamata* armour	Matei *et al.* 2004
Zalău-Dealul Lupului M6	2^{nd} c.	bowl	two iron spearheads; iron boss; iron sword; bronze arrowhead; iron arrowhead; iron belt buckle; bronze pendant; two *omphalos* bowls; two bowls; iron shears	Matei *et al.* 2004
Zalău-Valea Mâţii-Laminor M1	2^{nd}-4^{th} c.	urn (?)		Matei and Stanciu 2000: 104-105

Within Roman Dacia, Soporu de Câmpie is one of the most important examples of nucleated rural burial. A total of 193 burials were excavated between 1956 and 1961 to the south of the modern village (Protase 1976). Of those, 189 were of the Roman period, and four were dated to the fifth century. Because six contained more than one body and a few of them were destroyed, the total population of the cemetery is estimated to be 215 (Protase 1976: 17). Protase (1976: 73) classified the burials into the following categories:

- Cremation burials
  - Burials in urns:
    - i. Urn in a pit (131)
    - ii. Urn set in a box made with stone slabs (3)
    - iii. Urn covered with a stone platform (2)
  - Burials without urns, with ashes deposited directly in the pit:
    - i. Burial accompanied by ceramics (24)
    - ii. Burial without ceramics (2)
    - iii. Burial covered with a stone platform (1)
- Inhumation burials
  - No cover (20)
  - Covered with a stone platform (1)

The dating of the cemetery has been a matter of much debate (*cf.* Protase 1976: 81-82 and Horedt 1982: 54-55), but it was indisputably begun under Roman occupation. One of Horedt's (1982: 52) more important contributions was distinguishing between three phases of cemetery use on the basis of mortuary inventories with diagnostic materials. Although it is based on the idea of increasingly 'Roman' inventories in its second phase, it is one of the best models for the development of the cemetery. If we utilise Horedt's phasing, this leaves us with 63 burials in phase I, 78 in phase IIa, and 46 in phase IIb (Fig. 5.8). Additionally, we could add a third phase which corresponds to the fifth century occupation of the site and comprises four inhumations and structures at the south end of the cemetery. According to this classification, a few broad trends appear in the cemetery. First of all, the cemetery appears to have expanded first to the

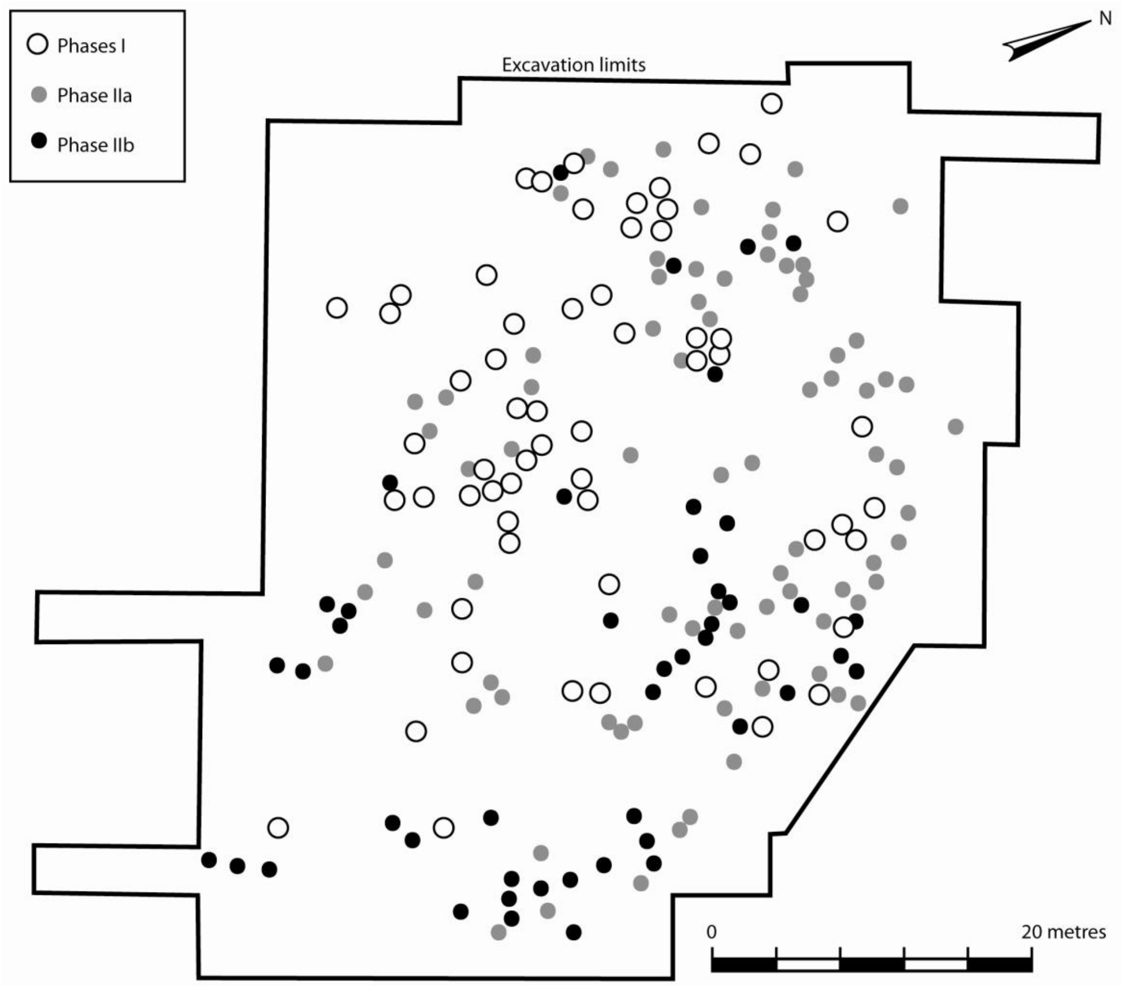


Figure 5.8: Soporu de Câmpie cemetery, Phases I and II. After Horedt 1982: Figs. 17-19.

north and then to the east, with a concentration of the latest burials in the southeast corner. The child burials of the first phase, oriented in similar directions, demarcated the northern edge of the cemetery.

One important feature of the cemetery is the multi-phased clusters of burials, none of which intersect each other, which may indicate ties of kinship or family marked by some type of monument which has disappeared through time. Another interesting note is the apparent void in the middle running north to south in all phases. This void may be explained by a path running through the middle of the cemetery. If we accept both of these theories, then the development of the cemetery starts to make more sense. In the first phase of burials, clusters are small and isolated to a few areas. In phases IIa

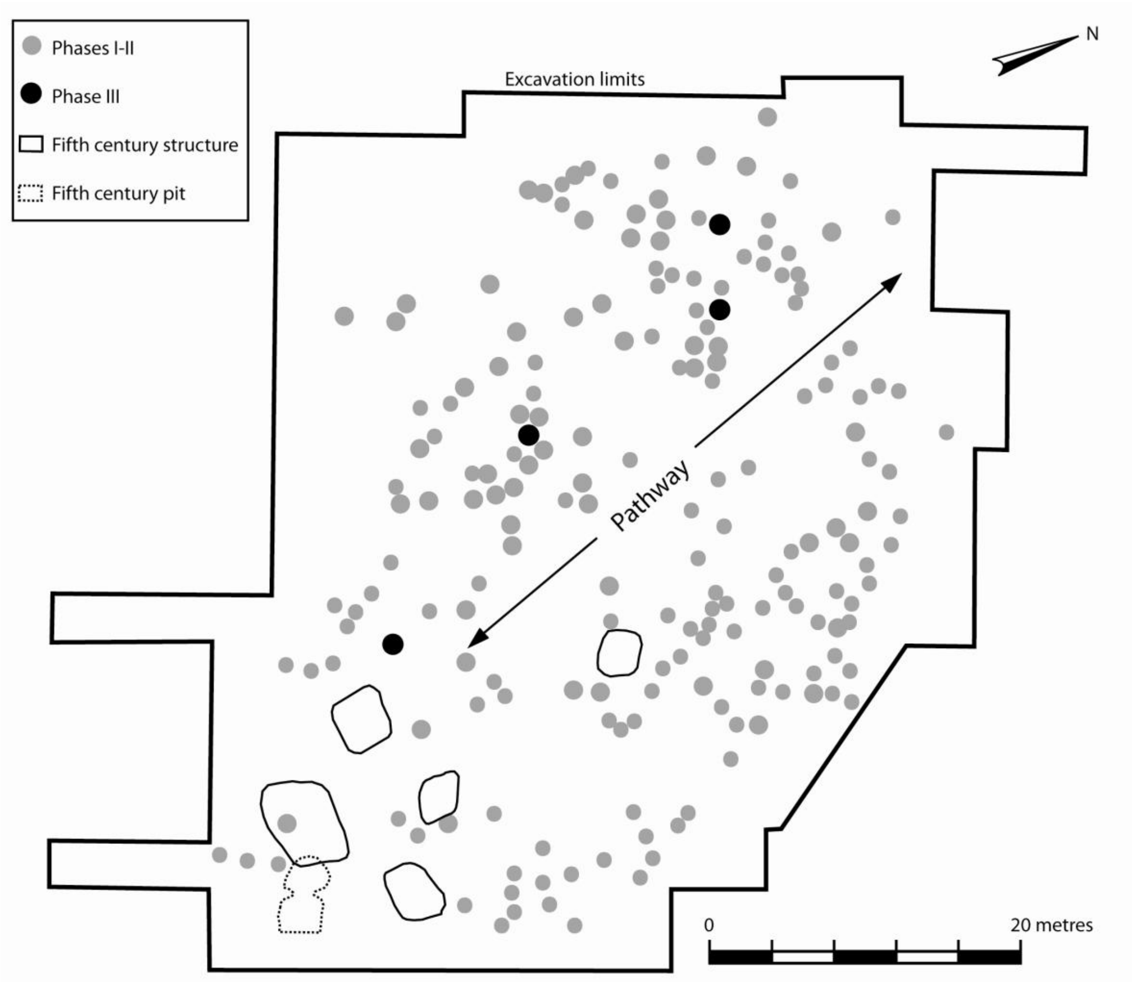


Figure 5.9: Soporu de Câmpie cemetery, fifth century. After Protase 1976: Plate 1.

and IIb, although clusters continue to form, there is a greater emphasis on defining the walkway in the middle whilst accommodating larger and larger clusters until the clusters dissolve into the density of the cemetery. In the fifth-century phase this pathway appears to terminate at the structures and the four inhumation burials appear to line this walkway (Fig. 5.9). This shows that the fifth-century inhabitants of this area respected these features of the landscape and possibly wanted to draw attention to continuity of use of the area.

At Soporu de Câmpie early inhumations outnumber later ones; but a general trend in the rest of the countryside is increasing use of inhumation through the third century and the post-Roman period. 16 rural inhumations in the study area are attributed

to the post-Roman period, though not a single one can be securely dated in Free Dacia. Only four cremation burials are attributed to this period, all of which come from Someşeni which is within the sphere of influence of Napoca, and, as argued in the next chapter, part of a 'suburban village' which holds an important status amongst settlements in the post-Roman period. The small number and the lack of densely-packed burial areas once again indicate an important change in the treatment of the dead in the countryside.

Although no other rural cemeteries of this magnitude have been located within the study area, it is extremely likely that large rural cemeteries of densely-packed burials were a product of the Roman period, indicating that the rite of burial had become widespread. An interface between the dispersed burials of the Late Iron Age and Roman-type cemeteries is seen at Badon-Doaşte, a Roman period burial group within Free Dacia. Although some of the burials are quite close together, it appears to be spread over a large area, with a significant distance between individual burials or clusters (Matei and Stanciu 2000: 28-29, Annex 1/3). The increasing occurrence of cemeteries in the Roman period represents an increasing concern with local community. This practice continues in the post-Roman period, but by the fifth century there is an increasing number of dispersed wealthy burials and burial groups utilising inhumation which also appears in the countryside, but only within the former Roman province.

A seemingly exceptional, cemetery consisting of ten inhumation burials of the late fourth to fifth centuries is found at Floreşti-Şapca Verde (Cociş *et al.* 2008: 137-138). All of the burials were disturbed except for two, but they are presumed to have rich inventories. The published burial CX41B contained a particularly rich inventory, which included a brooch with a trapezoidal foot and another with a bird's head which appears to have been ritually broken at the time of the burial.

Table 5.8: Individual or grouped rural inhumation burials (excl. Soporu de Câmpie)

Location	Period	Container	Inventory	Reference
Apahida-Omharus burial	5th c.	wood and ivory sarcophagus (?)	brooch; gold signet ring; gold bracelet; six gold Pendilien; gold belt buckle; two gold rings; gold shoe buckle; two silver jugs; gold dish; gold-inlaid wood dish	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 32-33
Apahida-burial 2	5th c.	none	iron sword; gold sheath; gold horse harness; gold belt buckle; two gold shoe buckles; gold bag clip; gold dish; gold-inlaid wood dish	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 33;
Apahida-burial 3	5th c.	unknown	gold belt buckle	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 33;
Baciu-Piatră Băştărău	2nd-3rd c.	unknown	-	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 42-43
Călăraşi-Bogat	2nd-4th c.	brick sarcophagus	-	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 82
Ciumăfaia	2nd-3rd c.	none	-	Mitrofan 1973: 135
Cordoş – burial 1/1944	5th-6th c.	none	iron spearhead	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 163
Cordoş – burial 2/1944	5th-6th c.	none	two bronze earrings	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 163
Cordoş – burial 3/ 1958	5th-6th c.	none	iron spearhead; three iron arrowheads; iron short sword; silver bandeau; silver fibula	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 163
Cordoş – burial 4/1958	5th-6th c.	none	iron knife; bronze brooch; string of beads; two pendants; iron belt buckle	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 163
Cordoş – burial 4/1973	5th-6th c.	none	earring; bead; bone comb	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 163
Dezmir-Crişeni	2nd-3rd c.	stone	-	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 185
Floreşti-Şapca Verde CX41B and 9 others	late 4th-5th c.	none	knife blade; earrings; two brooches; bracelet; amber beads; comb; spindle whorl	Cociş *et al.* 2008
Iclod-La Balastiera M1	5th-7th c.	none	bone comb (w/ iron rivets)	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 242
Miceşti-Pe Cărămidă/1933	2nd-3rd c.	stone sarcophagus (2 individuals)	-	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 272
Miceşti-Pe Cărămidă/1988	3rd-4th c.	brick	-	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 272
Suatu-Somoşa	3rd-4th c.	none	quern stone	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 373-374
Suatu-Somoşa	3rd-4th c.	none	two bronze fibulae; wheelmade vase; two glass beads; bronze fragment	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 373-374

Likewise, three burials at Apahida (one of which is based on a single chance find during salvage work) present a special situation. The widely-known Omharus burial and the other two princely burials hold inventories which are indicative of

political power emanating from the Roman Empire (Horedt and Protase 1972; Şt. Matei 1982). The gold crossbow brooch (*Zwiebelknopffibel*) of the Omharus burial is a symbol of the title of *patricius Romanorum* bestowed by the emperor himself if we understand it in relationship to the tomb of Childeric of Tournai, for whom the burial inventory was very similar (Kiss 1994; Diaconescu 2004: 134). From the burial inventories at Apahida, Cordoş and Suata, comprising over half of the rural inhumations of the post-Roman period, it appears that the deceased, usually placed directly in the ground, needed to display their wealth and possessions as opposed to late Roman burials in towns where few burial goods have been found. In comparison, when individuals were buried in sarcophagi of stone or brick, as at Călăraşi, Dezmir and Miceşti, there were no burial inventories.

One explanation for this occurrence is that burial became increasingly a phenomenon of the upper echelon of society in the post-Roman period, and that burials without inventories in sarcophagi represent only a brief post-Roman phase. Since inhumations in brick sarcophagi are characteristic of the former Roman towns in this period, it is likely that a real relationship exists between these few examples and the more numerous urban ones. This use of Roman building stone and bricks was probably a practice which was intentionally visible, in order to evoke Roman social connections in the face of political change. The new leaders, on the other hand, were buried with symbols of their political connections to Rome, all the while utilising cremation in those same regions where it was rarely practiced in the Roman period.

5.1.4. Burial and community

Notable transformations in burial practice signal changing relationships between the living community and its deceased members (Table 5.9). Ancestors were created

through burial, and served to construct and order the local community. In the Late La Tène period, burials appear to be reserved exclusively for individuals of some social standing who felt compelled to display their relationship to hillforts. These burials are segregated from the living space: the administrative centre of the hillforts of Şimleu and the settlements below at the foot of the hills; and the other rural burials give no indication of a proximate settlement. All of these burials appear to be highly dispersed. These characteristics give the sense that major importance was attached to individuals in the construction of community. When those individuals died, they became both a community ancestor and part of the landscape through a visible burial.

In the Roman period, while similar burial inventories persisted in the countryside, the sheer density of burial groups and their inclusive nature, brought about undoubtedly by Roman influence, indicate a changing social order. The most distinct representations of this were the Roman towns and military bases, but this practice existed in the countryside as well. This devalued the individual or even ancestral ties in favour of the community, as illustrated at Soporu de Câmpie. Two important changes occurred in the treatment of the dead from the Roman period to the post-Roman period. The first is the almost universal shift from cremation to inhumation, which cannot be attributed to Christianity. Although one of the burials at Napoca may be associated with Christianity, there is very little evidence for any Christian effects on burial practices during this period. The second change is the proximity of settlement to burials. While the burials at Porolissum, Potaissa and Napoca appear to re-use Roman cemeteries, or at minimum keep the burials separate from living space, the rural cemeteries at both Soporu de Câmpie and at Pălatca indicate that structures were located within immediate proximity to the burials. This appears to be the case of the suburban village of Şapca Verde as well, and perhaps even at Someşeni, Floreşti and Apahida.

Although it took over a century, the Roman cemeteries eventually went out of use as rich, exclusive burial groups began to appear in the countryside. There is too little evidence to say for sure how segregated these were from the settlement areas, but the examples that have been unearthed to date reveal dispersed distribution of graves. The fact that individuals were sometimes buried within former living areas of the settlements (at Potaissa, Floreşti-Şapca Verde, Porolissum) does not necessitate the dissolution of segregation of living and burial space because we are not certain in all cases where the population was living. Nevertheless, burials in the ruins of Roman buildings or adjacent to them (as at fifth century Soporu de Câmpie) shows a concern for incorporating ancestors into a built landscape rather than disposing of them in less conspicuous areas, where individuals would not be obtaining building materials.

Table 5.9: Relationship of burials to communities

Period	Percentage of individuals buried	Spatial relationships of settlements to graves	Density of burial groups
Late La Tène	Exclusive	Segregated	Dispersed
Roman	Inclusive	Segregated	Dense
Post-Roman	Increasingly exclusive	Incorporation?	Dispersed

5.2. Ritual depositions

Understanding ritual is important because, as a social practice, it draws on and reproduces important social, cultural and religious principles. Drawing from Hill's (1995: 95-101) discussion of Iron Age pits and ditches in Britain, 'ritual' can be defined as a practice wherein underlying metaphors and symbolic links are overtly exposed. They are infrequent, non-routine and explicit. For evidence of this, we look to pit depositions which are frequently recorded in salvage excavation, frequently named with interpretative labels: 'domestic pits', 'storage pits' and 'ritual pits'. This tripartite division does not always work. In instances when function is unclear, more descriptive labels are also used like 'pits with burnt walls' (*e.g.* Matei and Stanciu 2000: 51).

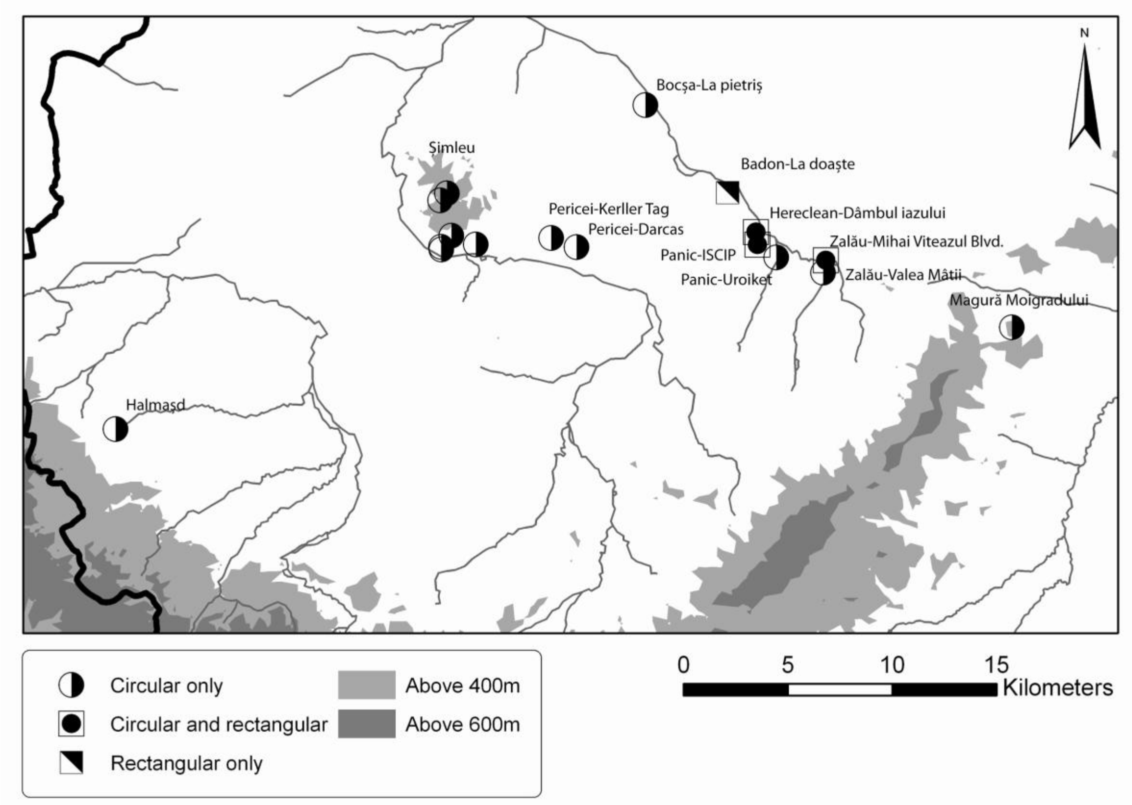


Figure 5.10: Ritual pit deposits in Free Dacia and the Meseş Gate and Şimleu areas.

Hill (1995: 95-101) argues that such names are insignificant, and that we should rather look for 'structured depositions' which tell us something about the nature and context of putting items in the ground. Structured depositions, he argues, 'are recurrently patterned both in terms of associations and disassociations between different types of finds and their spatial distribution' (Hill 1995: 95). Gerritsen (2003: 83) identifies three criteria for identifying these types of 'potentially significant' depositions: recurring patterning of data across space and time, content which suggests an offering as opposed to rubbish and their appearance in a public context. With evidence currently available in Northwest Transylvania these criteria have been chosen to analyse deposits in round and rectangular pits found in settlement contexts.

5.2.1. Structured depositions in round pits

Round pits of Northwest Transylvania are from 0.4-1.2 meters in diameter and 0.4-0.6 meters deep, containing animal bones, pottery and other items ranging from querns and loom weights to disarticulated human remains (Table 5.1). They are usually infilled with soil which shows signs of burning. These pits are found mainly at hillforts in the Late La Tène, though this may reflect patterns of archaeological intervention. They are usually found near to dwellings or hearths. In the Roman period they are found all over the countryside in Free Dacia, but only rarely within the province. Round pits are also found in the Hallstatt period and the Bronze Age, often containing similar items (Pop *et al.* 2007).

The largest concentration of pits in the study region is found at Măgura Moigradului. Over four phases of excavation 193 Iron Age pits were discovered. For some, chronology was able to be established: 80 dated to the first phase (second to first century BC); six to the second phase (first century BC to first century AD); and 25 to the latest phase (first century AD). The proportion of pits to structures (20:1 in the first phase, 6:1 in the second and nearly 1:1 in the third phase) has been taken to indicate the transformation of Măgura Moigradului from a religious centre into a fortified settlement for permanent dwellings (Pop 2006: 48-50). This argument is augmented by the fact that the nearby fortified settlement at Citeră, covering nearly six hectares, goes out of use during the first century BC. However, only 5.3 per cent of the plateau has been excavated (Pop 2006: 48); and without knowledge about the other 95 per cent of the surface area, it is impossible to say with certainty whether this activity declined over time. Furthermore, numerous post-depositional processes may have affected visibility of features, including a temporary Roman phase (see 4.1), treasure-hunting at the beginning of the century, erosion and modern quarrying.

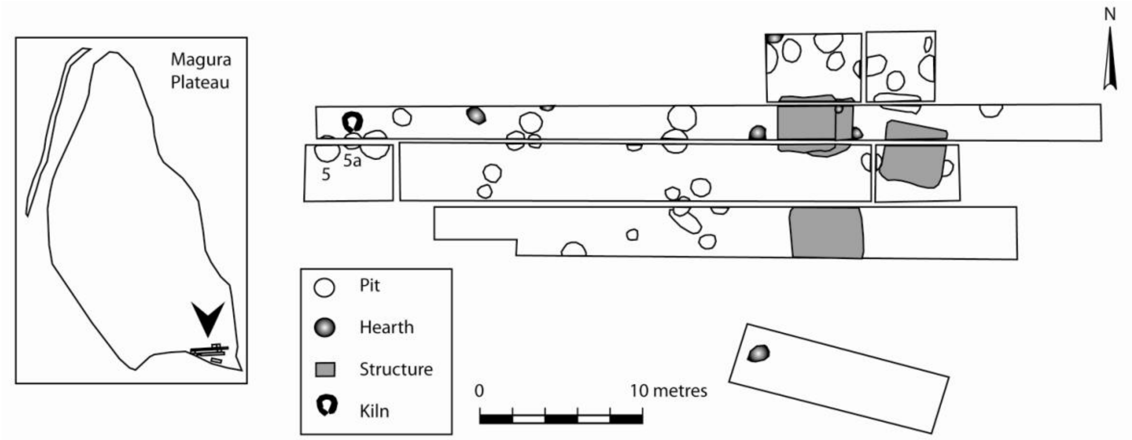


Figure 5.11: Features with animal bones, pottery and human remains at Măgura Moigradului. After Gudea *et al.* 1986: Fig. 7.

Some pits were clearly grouped into clusters: one group of four (containing a pit with human remains) is clustered around a kiln on the eastern part of the trench; and another group of five is located in close proximity to two outdoor hearths (Fig. 5.11). None of these appear to overlap. The largest concentrations, however, are found nearest to the dwellings, although a couple of phases are apparent. In one case, a temporary Roman period dwelling actually cuts into three of the pits (Gudea *et al.* 1986: 128). However, in other cases, the pits appear to respect the dwellings. In other parts of Măgura, pits cluster around hearths, an interesting feature given their infilling with burnt soil. Pop and Bancea (2004: 201-202) have also noted daub and quern stones, either whole or fragmentary were deposited in some of these hearths.

Although these rituals endure in the countryside of Free Dacia in the Roman period, evidence for them within the territory of formal Roman occupation is rare. A single example is found at to the north of the ancient town of Napoca, where underneath modern and medieval layers three pits were found containing Roman pottery. One of these contained also burnt bones of animals, perhaps representing links to these Dacian community practices (Fig. 5.7, no. 1) (Mitrofan 1964: 208).

Table 5.10: Round pit depositions containing pottery and/or animal bone

Site name	Find/context	Period	Reference
Bocşa-La Pietriş	two pits containing: a) pieces of worked antler and burnt daub; 2) pottery fragments comprising rims and bases, a spindle whorl and an antler	R/PR	Matei and Stanciu 2000: 34-35
Halmaşd	four pits containing animal bones and pottery	LIA	Pop and Bancea 2004: 199-200
Hereclean-Dâmbul Iazului	burnt earth, rim sherds, charcoal, fragments of animal bones	R/PR	Matei and Stanciu 2000: 51
Măgura Moigradului	193 pits containing whole vases or fragments, burnt and unburnt animal bones, daub, charcoal and remains of burnt stakes; notable ones contained: a) the upper half of a female skeleton, fragments of jars and bowls and a necklace; b) 10 whole vases, some of which were burnt; c) four large rocks with signs of burning; d) two male and one female skeletons with a large quantity of burnt and unburnt animal bone, including ribs and the jaw of a sheep, the jaw of a cow and the distal radius of a horse; e) fragments of a human tibia and fibula f) burnt human phalanx	LIA	Gudea *et al.* 1986: 126-128; Gudea *et al.* 1988: 158-160; Pop and Bancea 2004: 198-202
Napoca-Piaţa Gării	three pits containing pottery; one containing burnt animal bones	R	Crişan *et al.* 1992: 132
Panic-I.S.C.I.P.	small ceramic fragments and burnt soil	R/PR	Matei and Stanciu 2000: 103-104
Panic-Uroiket	four pits all containing burnt soil, burnt and unburnt pebbles, animal bones, charcoal and ceramic fragments in varying amounts	R/PR	Matei and Stanciu 2000: 69-71
Pericei-Keller Tag	six pits containing animal bones and pottery	LIA	Pop and Bancea 2004: 199-200
Pericei-Darvas	one pit containing burnt wood, pottery and animal bone	R	Matei and Pop 2004
Şimleu-Cetate	39 pits containing animal bones and pottery	LIA	Pop and Bancea 2004: 199-200
Şimleu-Centru	five pits containing animal bones and pottery	LIA	Pop and Bancea 2004: 199-200
Şimleu-Observator	56 pits containing burnt and unburnt animal bones and pottery (some whole vases, some intentionally broken), ash, daub; notable ones contained a) a body and a needle of a brooch; b) a human skull without the jaw and a whole pot; c) 16 whole pots, daub and loom weight fragments; d) brooch needle e) brooch body	LIA	Pop and Bancea 2004:199-202; Pop *et al.* 2009
Şimleu-Soare St.	one pit containing animal bones and pottery	LIA	Pop and Bancea 2004: 199-200
Şimleu-A. Mureşeanu St.	one pit containing pottery and unburnt animal bones; another pit containing pottery, ashes, charcoal, large rocks covering the skeleton of a child with a crushed skull	LIA	Pop 1999; Pop and Culic 2008
Şimleu-Uliul cel Mic	11 pits containing burnt and unburnt animal bones and pottery; one contained corroded iron	LIA	Pop *et al.* 2008; Pop and Bancea 2004: 199-200; Matei 1979b: 18

Site name	Find/context	Period	Reference
Zalău- Mihai Viteazul Blvd.	one pit inside longhouse containing at its bottom charcoal, ashes, bird bones; in its filling were fragments of two handmde vases; in the filling were a spindle whorl, a loom weight and a bone comb; toward the top was the base of a fine handmade vase	R/PR	Matei and Stanciu 2000: 86-102
Zalău-Valea Mâții-Laminor (Roman)	12 pits containing ceramic fragments and ashes; notable ones contained: a) a bronze brooch (Almgren VI.159); b) skeleton of a young pig; c) posterior of a young pig along one wall and charred remains of common wheat and two peas; d) skeletons of three hares and a bronze bracket; e) two fragments of loom weights; f) a whole decorated cup with remains of secondary burning and a whole miniature vase	R/PR	Matei and Stanciu 2000: 104-106

Most pits are fairly uniform in their contents, containing animal bones, ceramic fragments, pebbles and charcoal with other individual items, but there are a few variations. These include:

- Depositions of whole vessels, sometimes broken on the spot, at Şimleu-Observator (Bejinariu and Pop 1995; Pop *et al.* 2009: 211) and Măgura (Gudea *et al.* 1986: 126-128)
- Human remains, sometimes disarticulated (Table 5.2), found inside the apsidal structure at Şimleu-Observator (Pop *et al.* 2000; Pop and Bancea 2004: 202), Şimleu-Andrei Mureşeanu St. (Pop and Bancea 2004: 202) and Măgura (Gudea *et al.* 1986; Pop and Bancea 2004: 198-199)
- Burning the pit prior to the deposition of charred grain or chaff, at Zalău-Valea Mâtii-Laminor (Matei and Stanciu 2000: 105).
- Deposition inside post-built structure of Construction 1/Dwelling 5 at Zalău-Mihai Viteazul Blvd. (Matei and Stanciu 2000: 96, Annex 14)

The majority of these types of pits, on the basis of their proximity to living spaces, similar assemblages, small size and occasional overlap indicating brief usage may be interpreted as signs of ritualised behaviour practiced at the level of the household, but understood in terms of the community. While the contents of some of the pits varied, common rituals were involved. First, a pit was dug for some purpose, perhaps for storage or disposal. Something was placed on the bottom, like rocks or organic material, serving a functional purpose of stabilising the pit. A fire was made somewhere near the pit which probably involved cooking animal meat. The pit was then

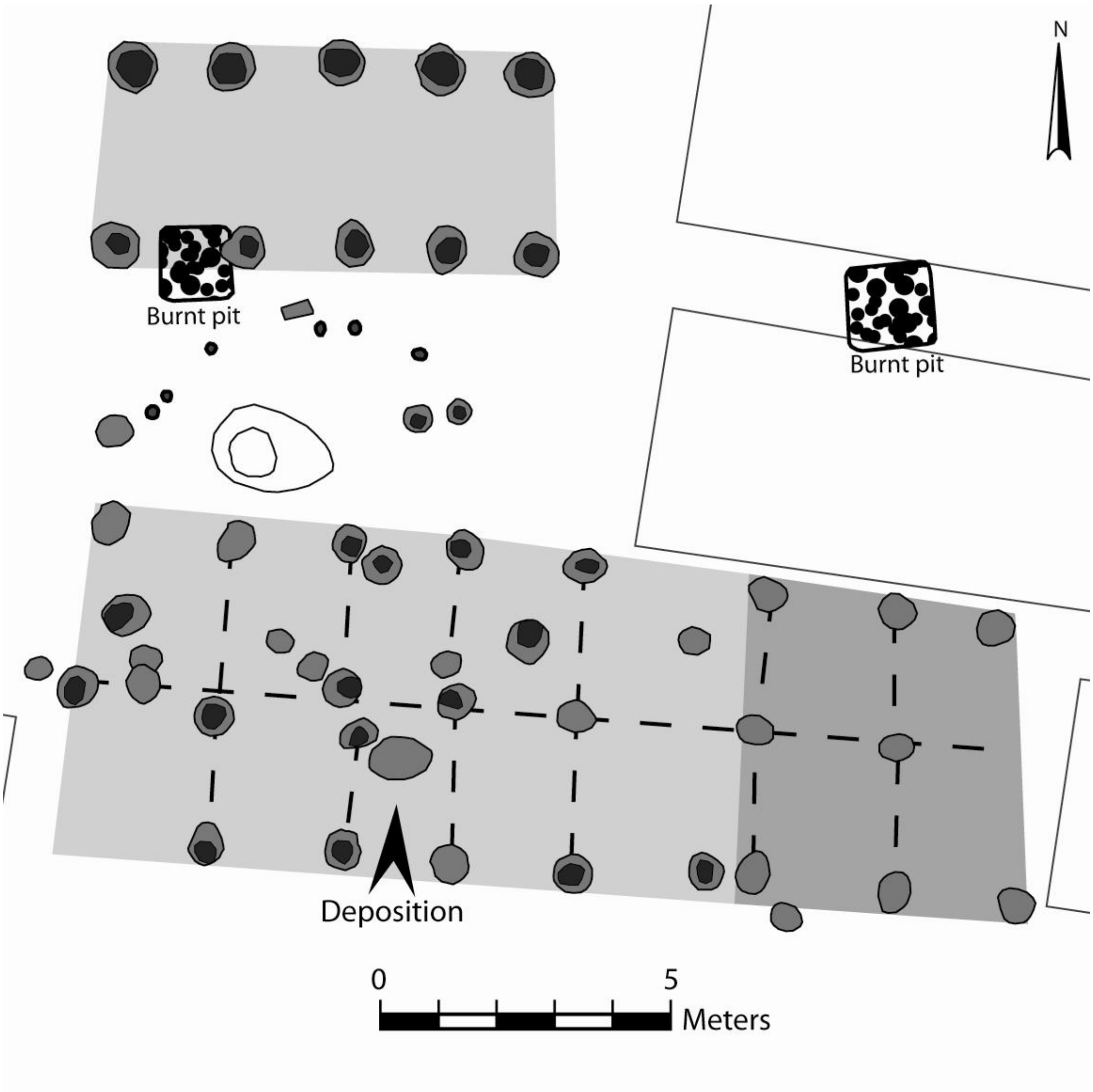


Figure 5.12: Deposition in structure and burnt pits at Zalău-Mihai Viteazul Blvd. After Matei and Stanciu 2004: Annex 14.

filled in with the remains of the fire, usually along with other personal items, such as quern stones, items associated with weaving and personal ornament. This could signify a household rite of passage for individuals associated with the materials.

This act can be seen as a ritual creating a sense of community among neighbouring households, since it is something that was meant to be seen. At the same time, these rituals practiced both locally and regionally created more distant links through both time and space. This is one Dacian practice which finds continuity in the Roman province and Free Dacia, though the scale appears to be much reduced (only 24

cases can be placed within the Roman period versus 342 from the Classic Dacian period). The intensity at which this practice occurs in and around hillforts may reflect that it was something which was associated with binding communities to their local leaders. The appearance of this in the countryside, alongside cremation burials with weapons and personal ornamentation, may indicate the continuity of these practices in an effort to re-create that sense of place which was destroyed in the Roman occupation.

5.2.2. Rectangular pits with signs of burning

Rectangular pits with burnt sides are characteristic only of the Meseş Gate area of Free Dacia in Northwest Transylvania, although they can be found in other places in Dacia (Table 5.11). These pits show signs of burning and are frequently lined with clay sides. They have flat floors and occasionally taper toward the bottom. They have an average size of about 1.45 m^2 in surface area (ranging from 0.25 to 2.62 m^2) and range from 0.1 to 0.8 metres in depth. They are always oriented along the same axis as nearby contemporaneous structures. The single largest concentration of them at Zalău-Mihai Viteazul Blvd., as well as the site of Lazuri outside the study area, suggests that they were almost always positioned in very close proximity to dwellings or other structures. All of the burnt pits excavated at Badon-Doaşte and Hereclean-Dâmbul Iazului are of this type and they comprise 11 out of 12 pits found at Zalău-Mihai Viteazul Blvd, the only circular one being on the interior of the longhouse.

Many of these may have served as kilns for domestic pottery production, even if they differ in size and shape from known examples in the same area (such as Zalău Valea Mâţii). However, only the sides of the pits are lined with clay, not the bottom. Furthermore, in only a few cases are the pits paved with stones at the bottom. One of these pits at Zalău-Mihai Viteazul Blvd. had a layer of compact stone at the bottom

(G2). However, while the soil at the bottom was burnt, it appears to have been covered by a layer of small stones which were not burnt. Even if these functioned as kilns at one point, the structured nature of their filling, which involved setting some items inside and then filling the interior with burnt earth and wood, defies any functional explanation.

Although these pits are roughly the same size and position as the round ones, the available evidence suggests these developed only after the first century AD, probably as a result of communities of northern Europeans. Where they do appear, they are associated with intrusive forms of architecture, specifically the byre-house and *Grubenhäuser* at Zalău. Their temporary nature is indicated by the fact that they are occasionally reshaped or moved to accommodate new structures. While these pits appear to serve a similar function to the round pits, the deposition of bones (human or animal) does not appear to be integral to the ritual, although they may be included.

Table 5.11: Rectangular pits with interior signs of burning (2nd-4th c. AD); lower part lists relevant parallels outside the study region.

Site name	Find/context	Reference
Badon-Doaşte	filled with carbon and ash	Matei and Stanciu 2000: 28-30
Hereclean-Dâmbul Iazului	a) lined with burnt clay walls, containing burnt earth, stones, pieces of mica schist, and large masses of carbonised wood in two corners; no traces of burning on foundation; b) lined with burnt clay walls, containing burnt earth and in the centre a fragment of a handmade pot and another of a wheelmade pot alongside a small piece of quarried stone	Matei and Stanciu 2000: 48-51
Panic-I.S.C.I.P	a) lined with burnt clay walls, filled with carbonised wood and burnt earth; b) lined with burnt clay walls, containing bits of prehistoric pottery, carbon and burnt earth; b) lined with burnt clay walls filled with burnt earth	Matei and Stanciu 2000: 103-104
Zalău-Mihai Viteazul Blvd	11 pits lined with burnt clay walls containing: unburnt animal bones, small wheelmade and handmade ceramic fragments, limonite, unburnt pebbles, burnt earth, ashes	Matei and Stanciu 2000: 86-102
Lazuri-Lubi Tag	4 rectangular pits with burnt sides containing: a) a jaw and vertebra of a cow; b) animal bone, unburnt, including a boar jaw; c) two unburnt boar jaws and part of a cranium; unburnt animal bones, carbonised wood	Matei and Stanciu 2000:53-60

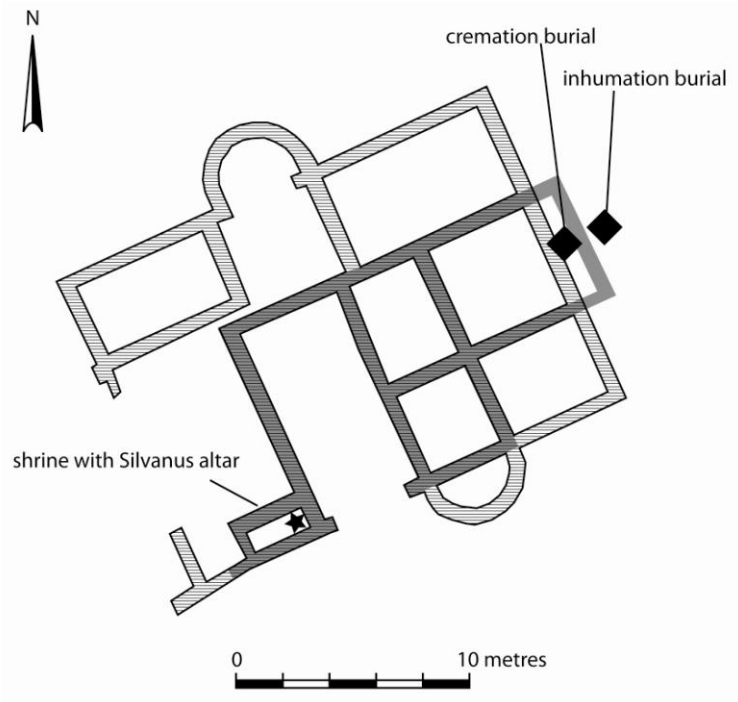


Figure 5.13: Burials (diamonds) and altar (star) at Ciumăfaia villa. After Mitrofan 1973: Fig. 5.

5.2.3. Burials in living spaces

There are many examples of burials in living spaces in Northwest Transylvania described in section 5.1. In most of these cases, the buildings had clearly gone out of use before the burials were made. At the Roman period villa at Ciumăfaia, however, excavation notes indicate that next to the northeasternmost wall of the phase I structure an inhumation without an inventory was found (Mitrofan 1973: 135). Furthermore, between the phase I and II walls at a deeper level were found ceramics, ashes, human bones and tile (Fig. 5.12). The problems associated with the phasing of this building have already been discussed, but nevertheless, if the excavator was correct in this interpretation, this activity could be interpreted as a ritual of rededication. These burials are unlike anything else noted for the Roman period in this area, but it seems clear that these activities are related, which places both within the Roman period as opposed to the post-Roman period. The lack of care spent on the deposition of these remains shows that these burials should not be interpreted in the same way as formal burials of the Roman period, and that the ritual associated with them may be more important than the

recognition of the decease individual. It seems probable that these were people who either inhabited the villa or were related to them. In the absence of monuments to mark the burials, it is suggested that these were slaves or *vilici*.

5.3. Votives and monuments

Religious rituals of the Roman period take on a very recognisable form throughout the Empire. Its most archaeologically visible form, the votive, differed markedly from the Dacian and Northern European rituals which have been described. The dedication of a votive was a private, individual act which took place in the public sphere. The act itself involved durable materials which extended its exposure to the public. The use of inscribed votive altars and statuettes is attested in both town and country. While there are few surprises in the range of religious practices or deities worshipped, the nature of the evidence allows a more thorough analysis of regional, micro-regional and local patterns than is possible in the Late La Tène (Fig. 5.14). Most of the evidence we have comes from urban and military contexts which are the subject of more excavations.

Figure 5.14 reveals the extent to which the Someş Mic and its environs differed from the rest of Northwest Transylvania. Almost all of the rural votive items and inscriptions are found along it or its tributaries. This is a good indication that this was the area most heavily affected by colonisation, and consequently the area where any traces of pre-Roman ritual practices were completely obliterated in the archaeological record by the more visible and durable forms of Roman religion.

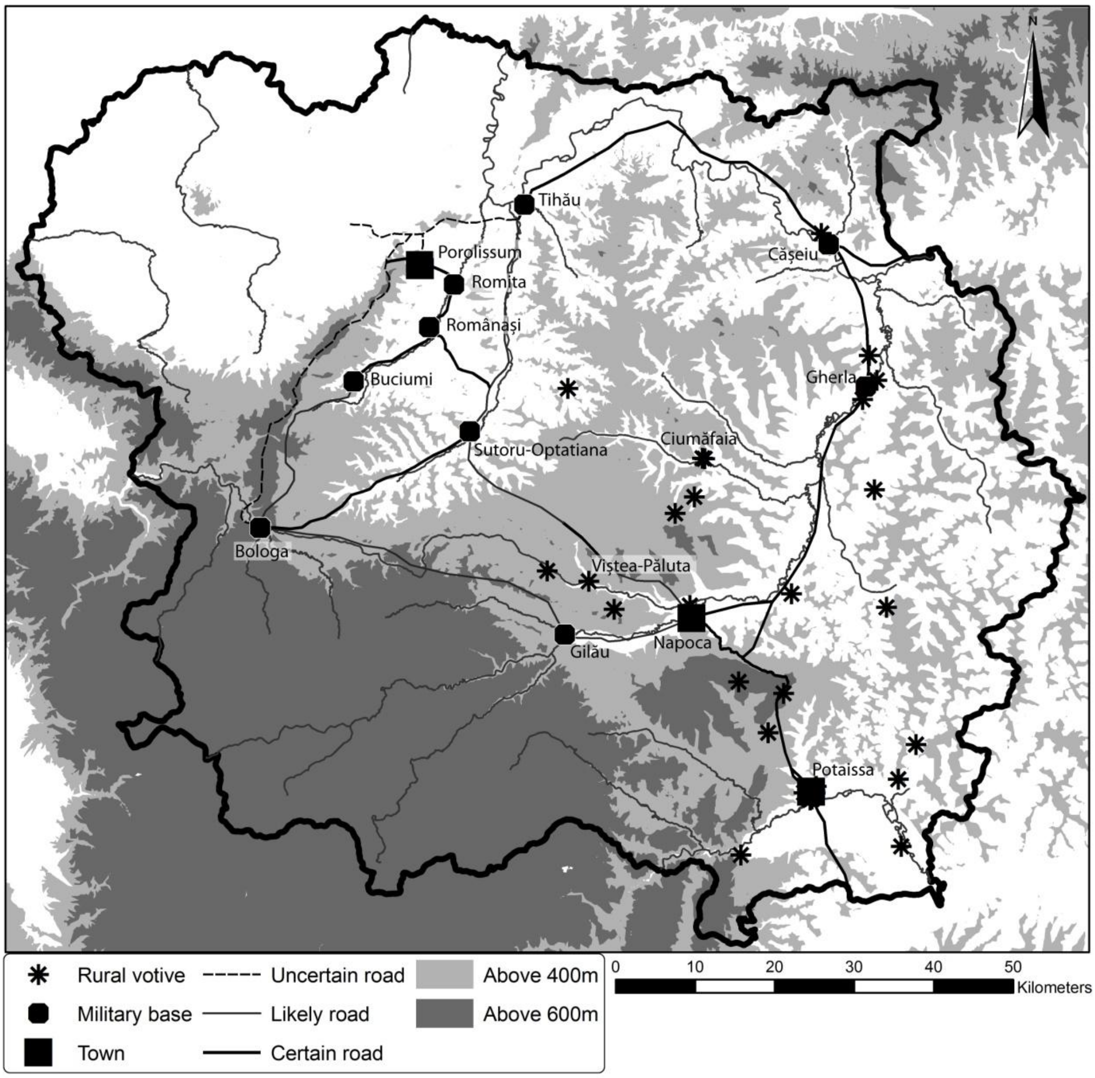


Figure 5.14: Settlements (town, military bases and rural settlements) with evidence for votive activity in the province.

5.3.1. Urban and military votives and monuments

Worship of numerous gods is attested in the towns of Northwest Transylvania, something expected from any given town in the Roman Empire (Table 5.12). The most common deities found in urban inscriptions are Silvanus, Jupiter Optimus Maximus and Liber Pater, though the latter has a significant presence only at Napoca. Diana, Hercules Sol Invictus and Mercury were also found in all three Roman towns, though in no significant quantity. These deities could have been brought from any place in the

empire. Of these, Hercules Invictus seems to have found particular resonance at Potaissa (AE 1950, 15; CIL III, 877; CIL III, 878), but for the most part inscriptions to Hercules, Diana and Mercury do not have any peculiar epithets. The inscriptions of Northwest Transylvania show very few examples of epithets indicating *interpretatio Romana* save for the widespread appearance of Jupiter Dolichenus which is usually associated with the military. Other examples of provincial *cognomina* can be found: two examples of inscriptions dedicated to Hercules Magusanus are known at Napoca and Gherla (AE 1977, 704; AE 1977, 702); Jupiter Balmarcod at Turda (CIL III, 7680); and Jupiter Tavianus at Napoca (CIL III, 860). These rare cases are exceptions to a rule, and if soldiers and immigrants wanted to distinguish their ethnicity or provincial origins, most were doing it in other ways than ritual dedications.

A number of deities seem specific to the ethnic composition in each town, such as *dea Suria* (Astarte) at Napoca where there was a strong and wealthy *collegium Asianorum*, attested from an inscription (CIL III, 870). The large quantity of Eastern cults in the towns may have made their way into Dacia from Moesia Inferior and Thrace via migration rather than from further east. Cults of Serapis, Sabiazus, Jupiter Dolichenus, Dea Syria and Men are not uncommon in these provinces, and are also notable for syncretism with Thracian deities (Tacheva-Hitova 1983). We also need to consider the presence of cults in relation to the army: there is much more variability in the deities at Porolissum and Potaissa than at Napoca, the only town where there was not a permanent military presence.

Table 5.12: Deities attested in towns of Northwest Transylvania (S=statuette, A=altar, MS=statue, T=temple, I=inscription, R=relief, G=gem/jewellery); based on data from CIL and Gudea 1989.

Deity	Napoca	Porolissum	Potaissa
Abrasax		G	
Aequitas		G	
Amor and Psyche		G	
Apollo		I, MS, G	I
Asclepius and Hygeia		I, R, A, G	
Azizus and Bonus Deus			I
Bel		I, T?,	
Bonus Eventus		G	
Bonus Puer	A		
Ceres		G	
Clotho			R
Concordia		G	
Danube Horsemen		R	R
Daphne and Apollo			R
Dea Syria	A	I	
Deus Invictus	I		I
Diana	I, S	MS, G	I, S
Dionysus and Silenus	A		
Ephebos		R, A	
Eros		G	
Flora		R, G	
Fortuna Augusta	I	G	
Fortuna Redux		G	
Genius		G	S
Gesehenis	M		
Hercules	I	S	I, S
Isis		S	
Isis and Serapis			I
Juno	I		I, A
Jupiter	I, A	I, G	I, A, M
Jupiter Dolichenus	I	I, A, R, S, T	I, A, R
Liber Pater	I, A, MS	I, R, A, MS, T?	I, S
Liber Pater and Libera			I, R
Maenad			MS
Mars		G	S
Men			A
Mercury	I, S	G, A	S
Minerva	I	R, G	
Mithras		T?	I
Nemesis		I	I
Pan		G	
Priapus	S		
Roma		G	
Sabazius			A
Saturn			S, T?
Saturn and Latona			I
Satyr		R	
Serapis		G	
Silvanus	I, A, S	I	I, A, M
Sol Invictus	A	G	I
Venera Victrix	A		
Ventus		A, G	
Venus		I	S
Victoria		G	I

The popularity of the cult of Silvanus most likely represents urban elites looking outward to the more rustic land and lifestyle which made them wealthy to order their household, something which is attested in Italy and Dalmatia as well (Dorcey 1992). Although a small temple has been excavated at Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, numerous altars to Silvanus across all of the towns in Northwest Transylvania are not sufficient evidence for associated public temples. A small shrine to Silvanus was found in the entryway of the Ciumăfaia villa, demonstrating that the individual household was also an appropriate venue for the cult of Silvanus.

Jupiter Optimus Maximus is well-attested throughout Roman Dacia, but exclusively to forts and towns. The most peculiar characteristic about the cult in this region is the frequency of its syncretism with the Eastern deity Baal (from the city Doliche in Commagene, hence Jupiter Optimus Maximus Dolichenus). A study by Sanie (1977: 132) showed that in the entire province, inscriptions to this deity comprise about 10 per cent of all religious inscriptions. The military was the most important factor in its existence here in Dacia. The cult at Porolissum was directly linked to the stationing of a Palmyrene unit (*Numerus Palmyrenorum Porolissensis*) at the base. Nine inscriptions or representations of the deity are known at Porolissum along with a temple, while at Napoca, without the presence of military base, there are only two.

Religion at military bases has already been the subject of a number of discussions which will not be repeated here (Alicu 2004; Ştefanescu 2004; Bărbulescu 2003), except to say that there are few surprises. Inscriptions from active soldiers to Jupiter Optimus Maximus and Nemesis in particular appear with some frequency at the military base of Căşeiu, so often it seems certain that there were cult centres for both. Jupiter also appears at Buciumi, Căşeiu, Gilău, Optatiana and Romita (Ştefănescu 2004). Very distinct patterns emerge if we look at the titles of the individuals making

the dedications. Every single dedicatory inscription from Căşeiu that has been found was made by *beneficiarii consularis* (Ştefanescu 2004: 266-268) save for one which was made by the *pontifex* of Porolissum (CIL II, 828). In the likelihood that there was a statio at the crossing of the Someş nearby, these officers were more explicitly and publicly associated with this cult than the British soldiers stationed on the premises. All of these were made to Jupiter Optimus Maximus (sometimes Dolichenus) and Nemesis. At Gherla and Gilău, where cavalry units were stationed, the *praefectus equitum* is represented on a majority of dedicatory inscriptions (CIL III, 832; Isac 1992: 152-153, 156).

In contrast, Napoca displays as rich a variation of dedicator titles as the deities which were invoked. The only titles indicated more than once are the *decurion* of the town (CIL III, 845=7657; CIL III, 864=7663; CIL III, 858) and the *procurator* of the Augustales (CIL III, 853; CIL III, 856; CIL III, 857; CIL III. 7662), local political roles as we might expect from Napoca. Other titles range from military tribune to the governor of Dacia himself. At Porolissum and Potaissa, the variation is much greater than other military bases, though not as great as Napoca. At Porolissum local priests are much better represented than the other towns (*e.g.*, Gudea 1989: 768), and at Potaissa there is a good mix of soldiers and civilians, such as a local scribe (AE 1974, 550).

This demonstrates a couple of different things about the practice of dedicatory inscriptions. First of all, it shows that at forts without the cosmopolitan atmosphere of an adjacent town commanding officers and their *officia* (usually the *beneficarius consularis*) were most likely to have inscribed altars and made inscriptions to particular deities, of whom the range is rather limited. Therefore, while not officially restrictive, the ritual practice reflected and was used to demonstrate hierarchy in the base. At Porolissum, Napoca, and Potaissa, a much greater variety of professions takes part in

these practices. While not wishing to de-emphasise social hierarchy, the accumulation of wealth (to purchase altars) and rich social networks were equally decisive factors. Considering for a moment that in Dacian society, outside of the hillforts there is little evidence for such permanent displays, perhaps the invisibility of the Dacian people in inscriptions is due to a lack of incorporation of the epigraphic habit. This may help explain the general absence of Dacian names in the epigraphic record which comprises mainly dedications and funerary monuments rather than building dedications (Bărbulescu 1994a: 53-57; 1994b; Ruscu 2004: 78; Russu 1977).

5.3.2. Votive inscriptions and statuettes in the countryside

A number of rural votive inscriptions indicate thriving rural cults, and not only in villas, although a substantial number come from Ciumăfaia (Table 5.13). In the area of Ciumăfaia, no less than six votive altars were found to the deities: 'gods and goddesses' and Fortuna Conservatrix, Juno Regina, Apollo, Mercury, Minerva, Hercules Magusanus. An altar to Silvanus Domesticus was also found *in situ* in one of the rooms at the entrance (see 5.4.2). Another altar to Silvanus Domesticus was found at the villa of Viştea-Păluţă (Russu 1959: 875-876). Silvanus appears to have widespread followers in the countryside as well as in the towns and military bases, although Silvanus Domesticus appears to have an important relationship with the wealthy elite.

Popularity of the cult of Jupiter shows the important relationship between town and country life for the wealthy individual. With the exception of Silvanus and Liber, the character of the gods in the countryside is civic: the Capitoline Triad of Jupiter, Juno, Minerva; Nemesis, who is associated with the amphitheatre at Porolissum; and Mithras who is usually associated with military bases. This may indicate that many of the wealthier civic elite were residing in the countryside, and perhaps not always in

large centres, as the analyses of settlement size and architectural elaboration indicate. Notable is the lack of other types of votives other than inscribed altars or other inscriptions. This indicates that most of the non-wealthy population in the countryside was not participating in these practices. In addition, the lack of deities represented in the countryside also may be related to the Dacian comprehension of deities. There is no evidence that Dacians conceived of their gods anthropomorphically, and thus there was no need to represent them in such a way.

Table 5.13: Evidence for Roman cult activity in the countryside.

Deity	Votive Inscriptions	Representations
Silvanus	7	0
Jupiter	3	3
Unknown	3	0
Nemesis	2	0
Asclepius	1	0
Apollo	1	0
Deus Invictus	1	0
Diana	1	0
Hercules	1	0
Fortuna	1	0
Mithras	1	1
Juno	1	0
Liber	1	0
Mercury	1	0
Minerva	1	0
Volcanus	1	0
Total	29	4

5.4. Centres of cult

The activities discussed in this chapter up to now have all been ones which appear at a number of places, from public venues in towns to the village or household. Centres of cult show a more formal organisation which, in the ancient period, was directly associated with political life.

5.4.1. Constructions at hillforts

A single building which has been interpreted as a centre of cult has been located at Şimleu-Observator (Fig. 5.15). This interpretation is based on its unusual apsidal shape and the presence of large pits within the structure, one of which contained a human skull without a jawbone (Pop *et al.* 2000; Pop and Bancea 2004: 202, Fig. 6). The interpretation does seem the most likely given the similar architectural form of excavated sanctuaries at Sarmizegetusa Regia and its surrounding region (Lockyear 2004; Glodariu and Costea 1991). It was certainly a structure meant to be seen as an individual was walking up the path to the hillfort, although passing near to it does not seem to be obligatory. The structure appears on a lower area of the fortified area. Its access does not seem to have been restricted, and it is not surrounded by any enclosure, unlike the higher point of Observator. If this was indeed a sanctuary, then, in the loosest form of the word, the cult was public. Movement to and from the structure could have been seen by those at the highest point as well as people who were at a lower altitude as they moved toward the entrance of the hillfort. The presence of a cult building at a hillfort indicates a relationship between politics and religion that is also related in the ancient authors in the story of Burebista and the high priest Decaeneus (Jor. Get. xi. 67-73).

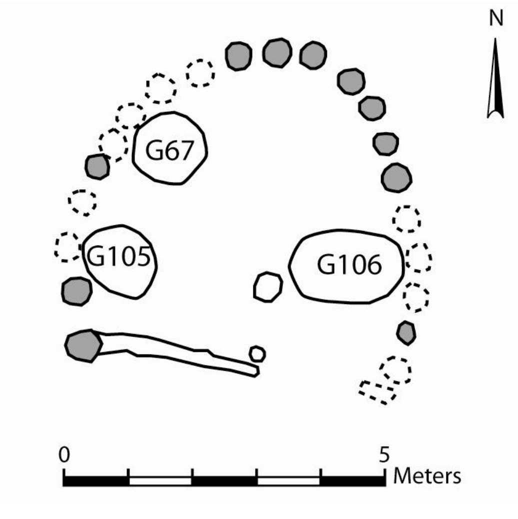


Figure 5.15: Apsidal structure containing three ritual depositions at Şimleu-Observator. After Pop and Bancea 2004: Fig. 6.

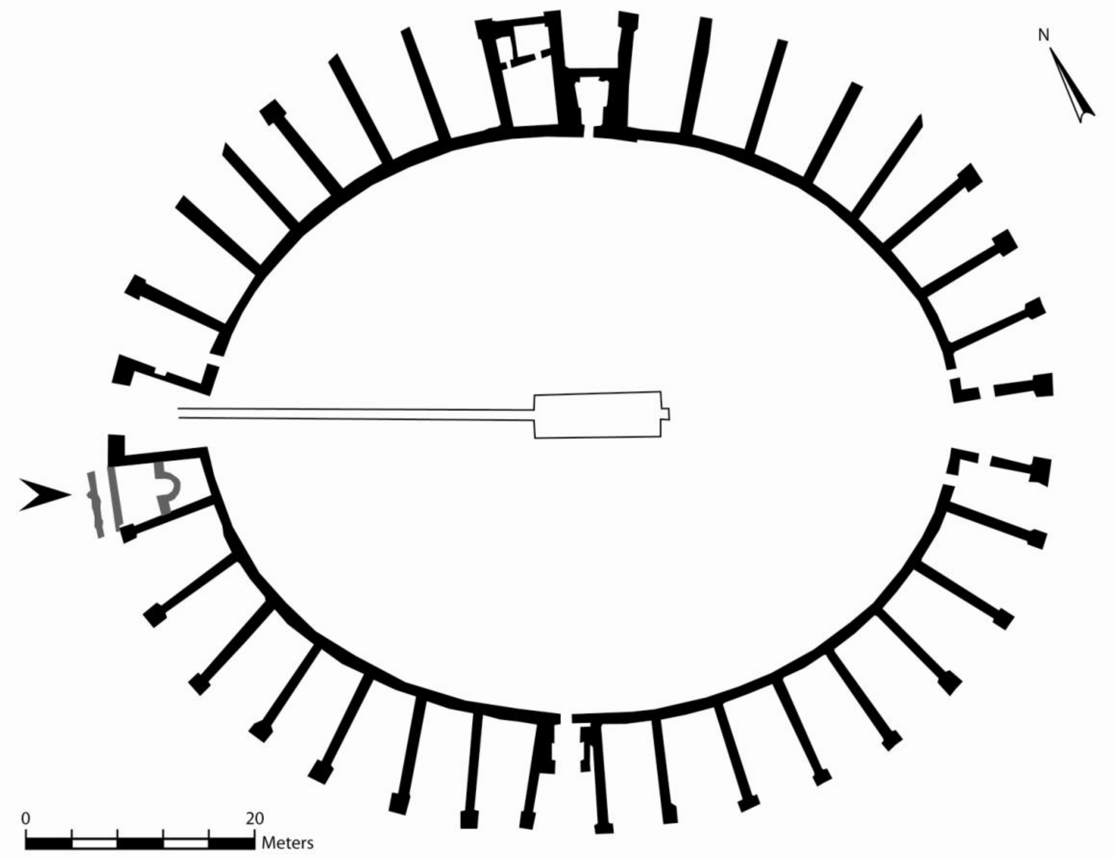


Figure 5.16: Location of shrine to Nemesis at the amphitheatre of Porolissum. After Bajusz 2003: Fig. 2.

5.4.2. Shrines

A shrine, as opposed to a sanctuary or complex, is a small centre of cult almost always associated with or attached to a larger structure built for another purpose. Because of the simple problem that many Roman ritual activities are more visible archaeologically than Dacian ones, we do not know for certain if shrines were features of the Late Iron Age in Northwest Transylvania. However, there are two attested for the Roman period.

The first one is the small shrine at the amphitheatre of Porolissum (Bajusz 1988: 2003). A small trapezoidal room was constructed adjacent to the northwest entrance to the amphitheatre, opening up to the exterior of the amphitheatre (Fig. 5.16). A small apse was built in the interior on a mortar floor. Inside, among other votive objects, was found a votive altar (or base of a statue) to Nemesis made by a centurion named Nepos

of the *numerus Palmyrenorum*, a unit which was stationed at Porolissum (Bajusz 2003: 166-167). The most important aspect of this shrine is its position at the entrance to the amphitheatre. At Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, there is a completely separate construction for Nemesis not incorporated into the main structure. At Carnuntum and Salona, access is granted to such shrines through the interior of the amphitheatre. Given that the means of accessing such shrines was not uniform throughout the Empire or even in Dacia, the choice to incorporate it into the amphitheatre should be seen as a deliberate choice.

Another small room interpreted as a shrine has been located in the excavation of the Ciumăfaia villa (Mitrofan 1973: 135). In the small room to the side of the entrance to the main corridor an altar to Silvanus Domesticus dedicated by one Aelius Iulius (*veteranus, ex centurione*) was discovered *in situ*, in the vicinity of ash, burnt bone, broken pots and a bone disc (Mitrofan 1973: 135). Pieces of painted plaster were also found in the same small room. Its position at the entrance to the building indicates that it was more important to display it to visitors than to set it back into more private areas. Although the precise entrance to this shrine has not been determined, it cannot be on the northeast side where the altar was found as it would obstruct the entrance. This leaves two sides which are on the interior of the courtyard and one side on the exterior. From the excavation plan, it seems the most likely scenario is entering this courtyard and then turning right to enter this shrine, so one enters facing the altar (Fig 5.13).

Even though we are dealing with completely different buildings, it is the spatial relationship of these small cult centres to their associated buildings which is important. In both of these cases, access to shrines is granted at the entrance of a building which individuals intend to enter. Both of these shrines are also actually incorporated into the building with which they are associated as opposed to separate constructions. This

spatial relationship is a recurring pattern in Northwest Transylvania, one which is further demonstrated by religious complexes.

5.4.3. Complexes at towns and military bases

Two religious complexes have been excavated at Porolissum. Of these, one postulated to be to Liber Pater belongs to the earlier phase of the settlement when it was laid out as a military *vicus* (Matei 1980); and so although it was used and changed throughout the later phases of Porolissum, it initially represented a cult associated with the military rather than the expansion of new cults into post-conquest Roman Dacia. Nevertheless, the third phase of this building (N2), generally held to be a temple dedicated to Bel based on an inscription found in 1937, certainly dates to around the time of Severus when Porolissum gained *municipium* status (Fig. 5.18). The entire area near this building is known as the 'sanctuary terrace', because of the religious character of the structures (Macrea *et al.* 1961), although this has likely been overemphasised (Tamba 2008: 340-342). While this area certainly supported a long history of religious activity in the form of worship of Liber Pater, Bel and eventually Christianity, there are few indications that this spread much beyond the building and its front exterior. To the south of the building there stood a stone altar, and immediately to the west a large pit was discovered (ten metres in diameter with a depth of four metres). The pit appears to have been covered by a tiled roof, and thus was likely connected to ritual activity associated with the altar (Tamba 2009: 345). Its location is of significance since this is one of the first buildings an ancient traveller would have passed after he formally entered the Roman world through the customs house.

The second religious complex to have been excavated at Porolissum (LM1S) is generally held to be a sanctuary to Jupiter Optimus Maximus Dolichenus (Fig. 5.17).

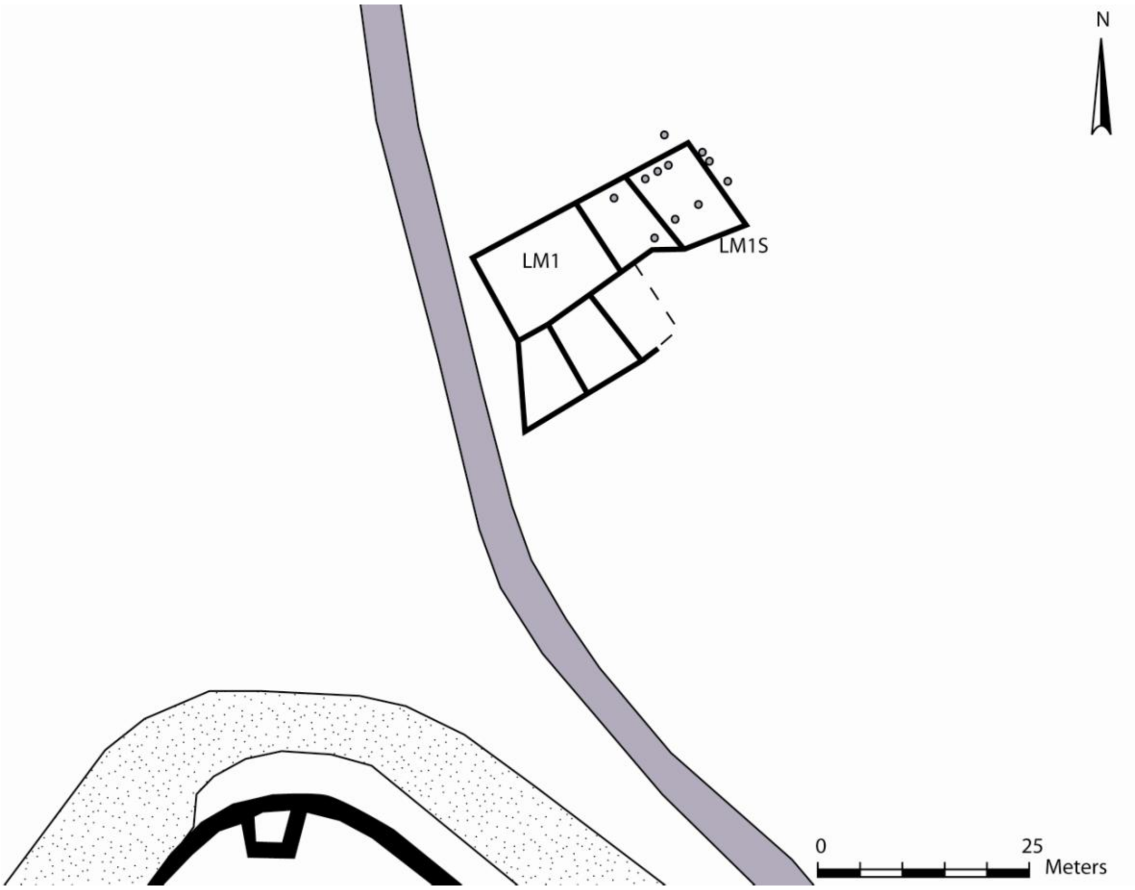


Figure 5.17: Location of Complex to Jupiter Dolichenus (LM1S) along road. After Gudea and Tamba 2001: Fig. 9.

The structure is located just across the road from the northwest corner of the fort. According to the inscription on an altar found within the complex, the building appears to have been constructed in the reign of Gordian, between AD 241 and 244 (Gudea and Tamba 2001: 25). This is supported by monetary and pottery finds within. Numerous votive statues and reliefs to Jupiter Dolichenus of various materials were found inside the structure along with two coin hoards (Gudea and Tamba 2001: 25-42). The most distinctive feature of this sanctuary is its relationship to building LM1 which is generally interpreted as a simple shop or *taberna*. Its date indicates that the *municipium* was already firmly in place at Porolissum; yet instead of the construction of a spectacular temple within the urban fabric, the financers of its construction, veterans and politicians, chose to build it close to the entrance to the fort but obscured from the

view of the main road. Two rows of postholes within the structure may indicate a modest *porticus*. It was burnt and systematically destroyed in the early years of the joint reign of Gallienus and Valerian based on the lack of any finds which date to or beyond this period. Therefore, the official sanctuary had a maximum life of less than 20 years.

Inside the fort on Pomet Hill may be another religious complex. The building known as C3, located 4 m to left of headquarters is believed to be a *mithraeum*, based on its subterranean character (4-5 metres below the interior surface of the commander's quarters), the presence of two Mithraic reliefs, a vaulted ceiling and walls painted with vegetal motifs. Alternative explanations put forth have been a *horreum*, an *aerarium* or a *schola*, but nothing is certain (Marcu 2004-2005). The significance of finding a *mithraeum* within the confines of the fortified area of the base cannot be over-emphasised as these complexes are usually located around the fringes rather than the core of this area. While the secrets within were meant to be exclusive, movement to and from the building was meant to be a matter of public knowledge in order to demonstrate certain social and political importance.

No temples have been excavated at Potaissa or Napoca, although concentrations of finds in certain areas suggest probable sanctuary locations. At Napoca, a concentration of column fragments, roof tiles, and Roman ceramics were uncovered along with two altars, one without an inscription and the other dedicated to both Jupiter Optimus Maximus and Silvanus. Six bricks were stamped with FISC, and a single tile with LEG V (Crişan *et al.* 1992: 131). Further down the same street, were found another altar dedicated to Silvanus Domesticus, two tiles with the stamp of the Fifth Macedonian Legion and another fragment of a column. Given the strong military association with Jupiter Optimus Maximus, a temple to the deity here is plausible. Just two blocks to the west is the Piaţa Muzeului where a number of finds have been found

in the proximity: two altars to Silvanus Domesticus, statues of Liber and Liber Pater, and the capital of yet another altar. However, the statues and the concentration of two altars to the same deity argue strongly for cult centres to Silvanus and Liber. Other altars and statues have been found sporadically distributed throughout the central Piaţa Unirii and to the south in the extent of the ancient cemetery.

The distribution of these areas is similar to examples of excavated temples in other towns in Roman Dacia. At the *colonia* of Apulum both excavated temples (to Liber Pater and Mithras), fall adjacent to the hypothetical western limits of the precinct (Oltean 2007: Fig. 5.34). This fits well with the concentration of altars and statues to deities along the northern wall (Liber, Silvanus, Jupiter Optimus Maximus). At Ulpia Traiana Sarmizegetusa, all the excavated temples fall outside of the walled precinct to the north (Oltean 2007: Fig. 5.31). At Napoca five altars were found to the north of the river near a large hill (Diana, Liber Pater, Bonus Puer, two unlabeled).

To the south of the fort at Potaissa, toward the Sândul River, Roman construction materials were found along with a Corinthian capital and altars dedicated to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Silvanus and Mithras. At the intersection of Cheiă and Bălescu a massive foundation was uncovered belonging to the Roman period with a foot of a column and five votive altars. Finally, at Şuia Hill, toward the northeast side of the clay quarry next to the artificial lake, fragments of Roman brick and tubing, a blank votive altar and statue of Saturn on an altar dedicated to Saturn and Latona argue for a sanctuary to Saturn (Crişan *et al.* 1992: 402).

A sanctuary to Nemesis is also known to be located in the *vicus* of Căşeiu from an inscription (CIL III, 825). Very little else is known about centres of cult at military bases without associated towns since emphasis has always been placed on fortifying elements and the clarification of structures within the fortified area, and also because

most of the inscriptions, altars and representations of deities were chance finds by antiquarians.

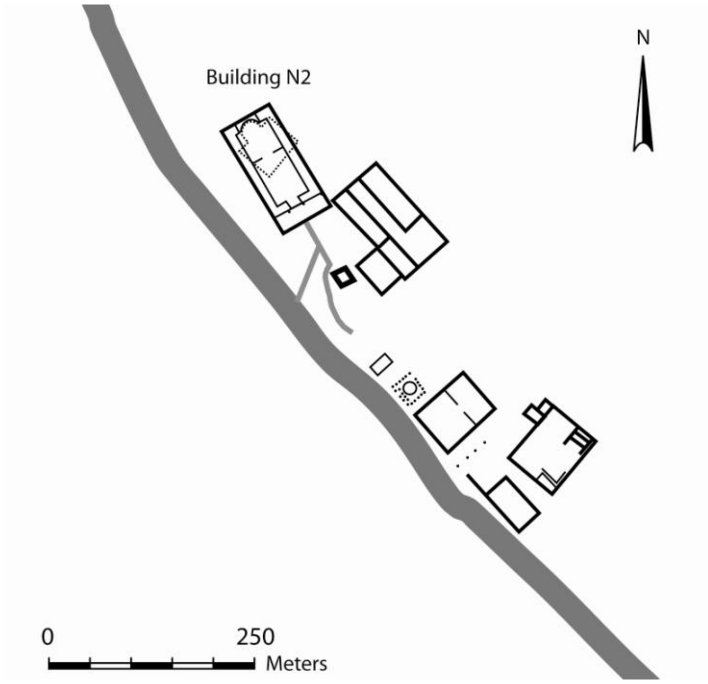


Figure 5.18: Location of Temple to Bel/Liber Pater/Christian church along road at Porolissum. First phase indicated with dotted line. After Gudea and Tamba 2001: Fig. 6.

5.5. Christianity

Early Christianity emerged within the framework of the former Roman towns rather than in the countryside. The most substantial evidence, the Christian church at Porolissum was constructed from the remains of the temple to Bel at the edge of the *vicus*, mirroring the preference for peripheral locations for public religion (Gudea 2002). The earliest Christian artefacts to have been recovered are found at Porolissum, Căşeiu-Samum and Potaissa, although most of the more significant ones have been recovered from unknown contexts. In addition, Napoca has a single sarcophagus with a 'Chi-Rho' insignia inscribed upon it (Protase 1985). Although the evidence for the emergence of early Christianity in the immediate post-Roman period is not certain, not a single bit of evidence appears in the countryside. It is significant that Christianity

emerges in the former Roman towns of Northwest Transylvania because these were former political centres and were possibly inhabited by some local leaders. As new power centres emerged outside of these towns, Christianity with its hierarchical structure would have been a welcome development in order to reinforce the community structure and social ties that were waning after the departure of the Roman military. Nevertheless, only at Porolissum is there any indication of a Christianisation of public space, and in this case outside of the main part of the town, the northernmost edge of the *vicus*. The rural village churches of a later period appear to be disjointed from any urban Christian processes that went on in Northwest Transylvania.

5.6. Conclusion

Although we know a great deal about ritual activity in the Roman period, we have very little to compare it to both before the arrival and following the departure of the armies. Tables 5.14 summarises the variance in practices by settlement type in each period according to current knowledge.

Like Roman religion, Dacian religion had two faces, a public one and a domestic one. The former consisted of formal, organised religion only associated with administrative centres and headed (probably) by a high-priest which is best known from written sources and archaeologically illustrated by the cult centre at Şimleu-Observator; and the latter consisted of occasional pit dedications conducted at the level of the household or small community. The difficulty of defining pre-Roman Dacian religious practices has much to do with the brutality of the Roman conquest, which targeted Dacian cult centres, but it cannot solely be explained by this. At excavated cult centres in Orăştie Mountains and the single example at Şimleu there is no evidence for any named or otherwise represented deities. There is no evidence at all to suggest that the

Dacians envisaged their deities anthropomorphically. Ceramic statuettes of animals are known at Şimleu-Observator (Pop and Bejinariu *et al.* 2004); but only two in human form have been found in Northwest Transylvania. One female statuette made of local clay was discovered in a large house near the Şimleu-Cetate and another at Marca-Cetate (Pop and Culic 2008). Neither have any distinguishing features which would indicate divinity. As the function of these is unknown, there remains no proof that the Dacians were familiar with this type of votive religion.

The Roman conquest brought with it very ritual variability linked with the increased number of ethnic and specialist communities. Most of the immigrants appear to come from the other Danube provinces, bringing with them the public face of provincial Roman religion. We note the similarities between the Illyrian burial practices at Porolissum and the popularity of cults which were especially popular in Upper Moesia and Pannonia. Jupiter Dolichenus was popular throughout the Danube provinces at military bases (Speidel 1978). Silvanus Domesticus was also in the third century AD (Mócsy 1974: 250-253). His popularity in Pannonia is associated with the expansion of family estates in the Severan period, where such domestic altars could be set up. It does not appear to be much different in the hinterland of the province of Dacia, as the one rural *in situ* Silvanus altar at Ciumăfaia was located in a large building which is probably associated with a veteran landowner.

There is one further pattern worth noting in the Danube provinces as a whole. In Upper Moesia, despite the incorporation of the elite members of the native community at Ulpianum, there is very little evidence for participation in the public face of religion on epigraphic inscriptions (Mócsy 1974: 153). Also in Pannonia, up to the Severan dynasty there is no evidence for any native gods or cults with the exception of Aecorna at Emona (Mócsy 1974: 182). Unlike Dacia, however, we know that native cults in

these areas incorporated named anthropomorphic deities, though they are quite scarce (Thomas 1980: 177-185). This implies that natives of the Danube provinces were either unwilling to adopt the public face of Roman votive religion, or that they completely embraced it in its imperial form without the incorporation of native deities. In the case of Dacia, which was speedily provincialised seemingly without the involvement of the native population, the former seems much more likely.

Despite the lack of any evidence for continuity of this public face of Dacian religion, there is still a strong possibility that the Dacians did use Roman cult centres, assimilating them into their own traditions. The location of the apsidal structure at the entrance to the hillfort of Şimleu-Observator displays a resemblance to later Roman locations of religious complexes at the periphery of the settlement, especially in regards to the three towns. This appears to be a specifically regional characteristic, though not directly related to Dacian religion. On a much smaller scale, this preference is visible in looking at the shrines of villas (Ciumăfaia) and monumental architecture (the amphitheatre at Porolissum). If we accept that ritual activity at the cult centre at Şimleu was probably defined mainly by offerings, which were deposited in the pits within the complex for safety, prosperity or other personal reasons, then it is not difficult to see why this finds some resonance in the Roman period after the Dacian cult centres had been destroyed. A Dacian could have partook in a similar ritual upon his or her entrance or exit to the towns of Napoca, Porolissum or Potaissa, regardless of the Roman deity to whom the complex was dedicated, using pots or other materials. This did not need to involve a ritual vow or fulfilment of a ritual vow inscribed on stone. In addition to a lack of knowledge of Latin or Greek, this could help explain why no Dacian names appear in votive dedications. Unfortunately, this is not something that archaeology

would readily reveal, but this transformation of religious practice could explain one way by which the native population was able to cope with its new landscape.

Table 5.14: Character of ritual activities at settlement types in each period of Northwest Transylvania

LATE IRON AGE	Hillfort areas		Rural settlement
burial type	cremation		cremation
burial container	ground/wood box		ground/urn
burial inventory	silver and bronze personal ornament; iron weapons; ceramic vessels; silver coins		bronze personal ornament
burial location	isolated		isolated
ritual deposit	animal bones, brooches, human remains, loom weights, pottery, whole vases		animal bones pottery
cult centre	shrine		-
ROMAN PERIOD	Urban centres and military bases	Roman villas, villages and homesteads	Free Dacian villages and homesteads
burial type	cremation/ inhumation	cremation/ inhumation	cremation
burial container	stone or brick sarcophagi/ urns/ground	stone or brick sarcophagi/ urns/ground	urns/wood box/ground
burial inventory	gold, silver, bronze personal ornament; ceramic and glass vessels; bronze and silver coins; iron and bronze tools; nails; ceramic lamps; weaving items; bronze toiletries	silver and bronze personal ornament; ceramic and glass vessels; brass and silver coins; iron tools; nails; glass toiletries	bronze and iron personal ornament; iron and bronze weapons; armour; bronze and ceramic vessels; iron tools; weaving items
burial location	cemetery	cemetery/burial group/isolated	burial group/isolated
ritual deposit	animal bone, pottery	human burial	animal bone, antler, brooches, combs, grain, loom weights, pottery, spindle whorls, whole vases
votive activity	inscriptions/ statuettes/ altars	inscriptions/ statuettes/ altars	-
cult centre	shrines/religious complexes	shrines	-
POST-ROMAN PERIOD	Urban centres and military bases	Suburban villages	Homesteads and rural villages
burial type	inhumation	cremation/inhumation	cremation/inhumation
burial container	stone or brick sarcophagi/ ground/building ruins	wood and ivory sarcophagus (?)/ground	brick sarcophagi/urns/ ground
burial inventory	gold, silver and iron personal ornament; ceramic vessels; iron and bronze tools; nails; weaving items; bronze and bone toiletries	gold, silver and bronze personal ornament; iron weapons; gold and silver vessels; weaving items; bone toiletries; gold horse gear; signet ring	bronze personal ornament; ceramic vessels; bone toiletries; querns
burial location	cemetery/burial group	burial group	burial group/cemetery
cult centre	religious complexes	-	-

Rituals at the scale of the household and community seem much more important and widespread. These rituals were an interface between household and community as they took place right outside the home but in full view of others. Depositions with animal bone, human bone, ceramics, burnt materials and other personal objects also endure in the Roman period, though it is greatly diminished. We must also note that not all of the changes in ritual practice in the second and third centuries was a direct a result of immigrants from other parts of the Empire. New forms of ritual activity also appear in Free Dacia which are almost certainly associated with the post-Marcomannic War settlement: rectangular pits with burnt sides, grain deposits and cemeteries. In addition to these depositions, burial also played a role in defining the community in the Roman period. With the exception of a few rural burials of the Roman period in Free Dacia with traditional Iron Age inventories of weapons and personal ornament, the individuals at the top of the social hierarchy no longer distinguished themselves from others in this way. Cemeteries, both rural and urban, made it necessary to establish identities within the context of a local community, mainly through the use of durable burial monuments rather than burial inventories.

Domestic cult did not cease to exist in the Roman period, but more official forms of public cult become more important for all levels of society. This by no suggests that religion in the Roman period was less hierarchical or more egalitarian than before. On the contrary, it simply allowed more individuals to access these social niches to differentiate themselves from others. It meant something different to visit a cult centre with an offering than to burn an offering in the back of one's home for only a few to see. This would help explain a decreasing number of depositions with signs of burning within the territory of the Roman province through the Roman and post-Roman

periods. This culminates in the development of Christianity, attested at Potaissa and Porolissum.

Many of the domestic ritual practices appear to completely disappear in the post-Roman period. This diminished variability period may be due to archaeological visibility, but it still is something we might expect. Without administrative organisation and an urban audience, there would be little reason to continue the more public rituals of Roman religion at cult centres. The continued use of Roman cemeteries in the fourth century argues that some practices did not fall off immediately.

Coming back to the question at the beginning of the chapter, the analysis of ritual activities in Northwest Transylvania shows that the Roman conquest destroyed the organised side of Dacian religion, which was associated with the previous political order; but it incorporated the small-scale, domestic, community-building rituals such as round pits or burials with rich assemblages. It made these rituals unnecessary by offering alternative means of ritualised community-building involving spatial partitioning: the use of inclusive cemeteries, often some distance away from the associated settlement, rather than isolated burials of leaders; and the consolidation of ritual dedications to deities into distinct centres of cult (shrines and complexes) rather than around one’s house. In this way, the new variety of rituals completely absorbed some of the older ones.

Chapter 6: Micro-regional Landscapes

This chapter focuses on the development of settlement in four micro-regions within the study area which have been subjected to sufficiently detailed levels of investigation with published results (Fig. 6.1). Variable research intensity in both spatial and chronological terms makes a simple distribution map of the entire study area ineffective for the detailed study of long-term settlement development. These micro-regions allow for the comparison between habitation histories and regional patterns in a way that is not possible on a larger scale.

6.1. The Meseş Gate area

The Meseş Mountains project north from the Apuseni Mountain zone and reaching over 800 metres in some places. This range was punctuated in a few areas by river valleys, but the largest and most important opening is the Meseş Gate, through which important communication routes have passed for over two thousand years (see 3.4). It has always been one of the easiest points of access from intra-Carpathian Transylvania to northwest Europe on land. Many other river valleys piercing the Meseş Mountains to the south are little more than gorges, dangerous to navigate and difficult to reach. Other possible crossing points were present including the Meseş Pass at Ciumarna, the route of the modern highway, and the pass near Buciumi. However, to avoid steep slopes would greatly increase the length of the journey. Strategically these other passes were important, but socially they were not, except maybe to bandits and refugees. Another alternative point of access was further to the north, at Jibou, but

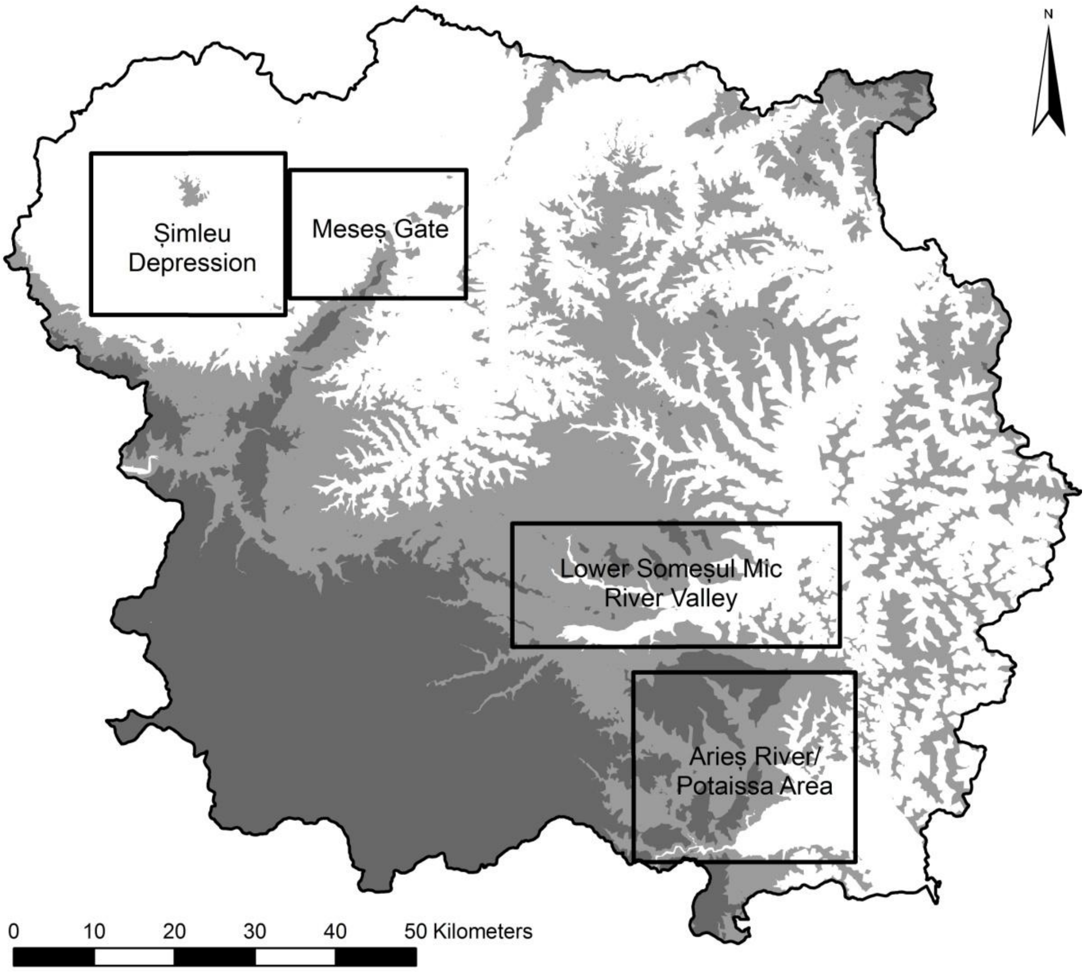


Figure 6.1: Micro-regional study areas

again, aside from the fact that the passage was under supervision, it appears very little importance was attached to it, as there are no nucleated settlements in the vicinity and the Roman road system does not appear to pass near it.

Although the Meseş Mountains form a liminal area within the Roman period in a political and administrative sense, it is also an environment for interaction and the formation of broader communities through the frontier area. As noted in the previous chapters, there are certain characteristics of the Meseş Gate which distinguish it from other parts of the study area that are worth recounting. First of all, there is settlement nucleation in all periods on either side of the Meseş Gate at Măgura Hill, Porolissum and Zalău. Over the entire area, there is an under-representation of small to medium-

sized rural settlement. Because of the complex topography of hills, the agricultural territories of large centres are much smaller, and the centres themselves much less accessible. Among animal bone assemblages taken at Măgura and Porolissum, we see an over-representation of cattle in bone assemblages. Finally, there are frequent ritual deposits in two types of pits in this area: circular and rectangular forms with burnt sides.

Archaeological intervention outside of Roman military sites has been somewhat limited, but field-walking expeditions and analysis of aerial photographs have not recorded a single rural settlement with certainty on the Roman side of the Meseş Gate. This is true of all the chronological periods concerned. Part of the reason for this is the modern rural character of the area with forests and pastures near Porolissum and Romita as opposed to the urban centre of Zalău on the other side of the mountain range which demands salvage excavations as it grows and develops. Isolated finds become important because they are some of the only evidence for human activity, be it settlement or other land-use. Another problem is that material chronologies on either side of the Meseş Gate do not match up (see 2.1 and Fig. 2.3). The horizon of Roman period settlement and pottery appears to last into the fourth century, whilst the Porolissum military base along with the other smaller bases appear to have been vacated by the 260s. To resolve this problem, only those settlements with certain evidence for fourth century occupation are considered in the discussion of post-Roman settlement.

6.1.1. Settlement trends and the social landscape

Only a small number of settlements are dateable to the pre-Roman period in this area (Fig. 6.2). As noted above, this is a consequence of imbalanced archaeological intervention in hillforts and Roman fortifications. This is most sorely felt on the

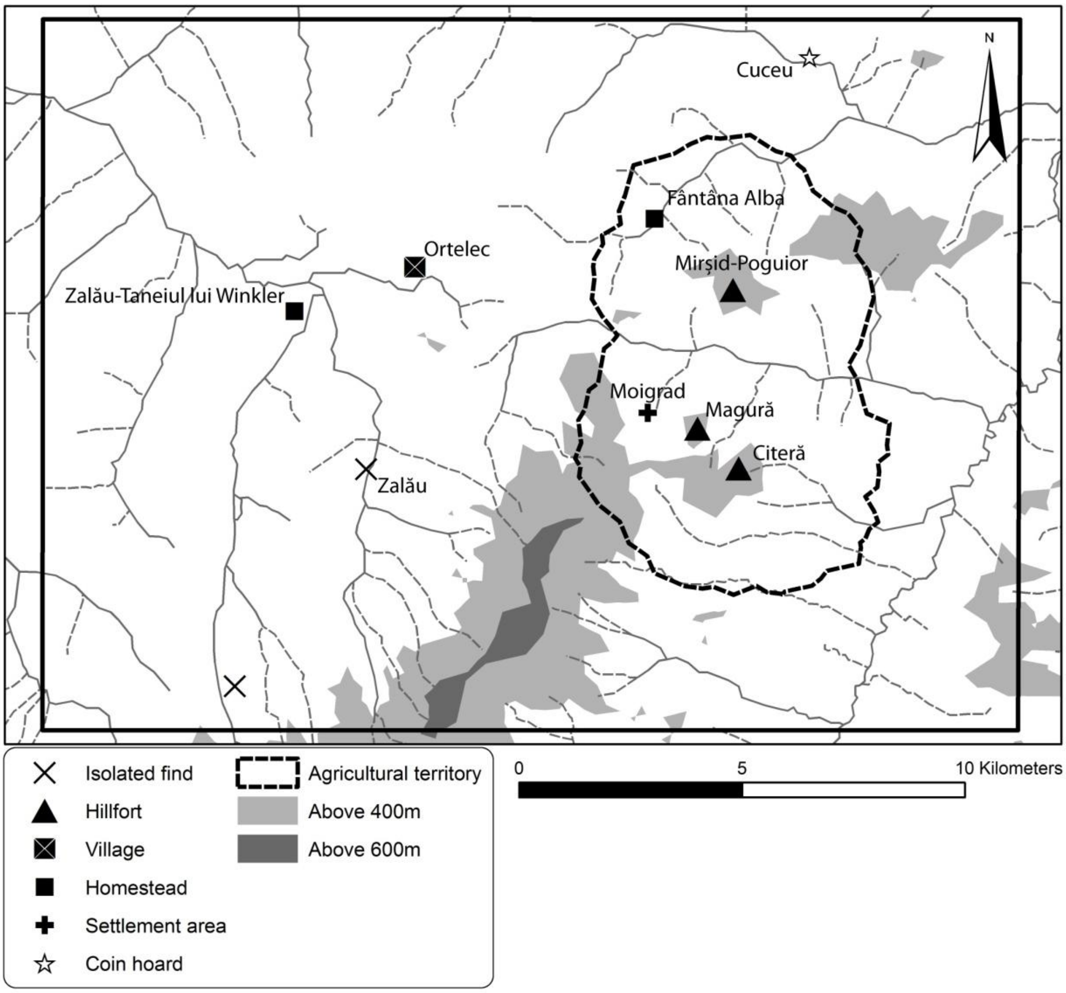


Figure 6.2: Late Iron Age activity in the Meseş Gate.

southeast side of the mountain range. However, along the entirety of the eastern side of the Meseş Mountains the situation appears to be much the same. The only known settlement area is the agglomeration focused on the Măgura and Citeră hillforts. It should also be noted that a few Republican *denarii* were located at Porolissum which are not out of place for the Late La Tène, although these were very likely brought with the soldiers or traded in the early years of occupation since no other evidence has come to light for pre-Roman occupation on Pomet Hill (Pop 2007).

On the northwest side of the Meseş Gate, much more is known about the Roman period. At least three Roman period settlements are certain to the north of the mountain range. Dacian phases dated with handmade pottery were located at Fântâna Alba in

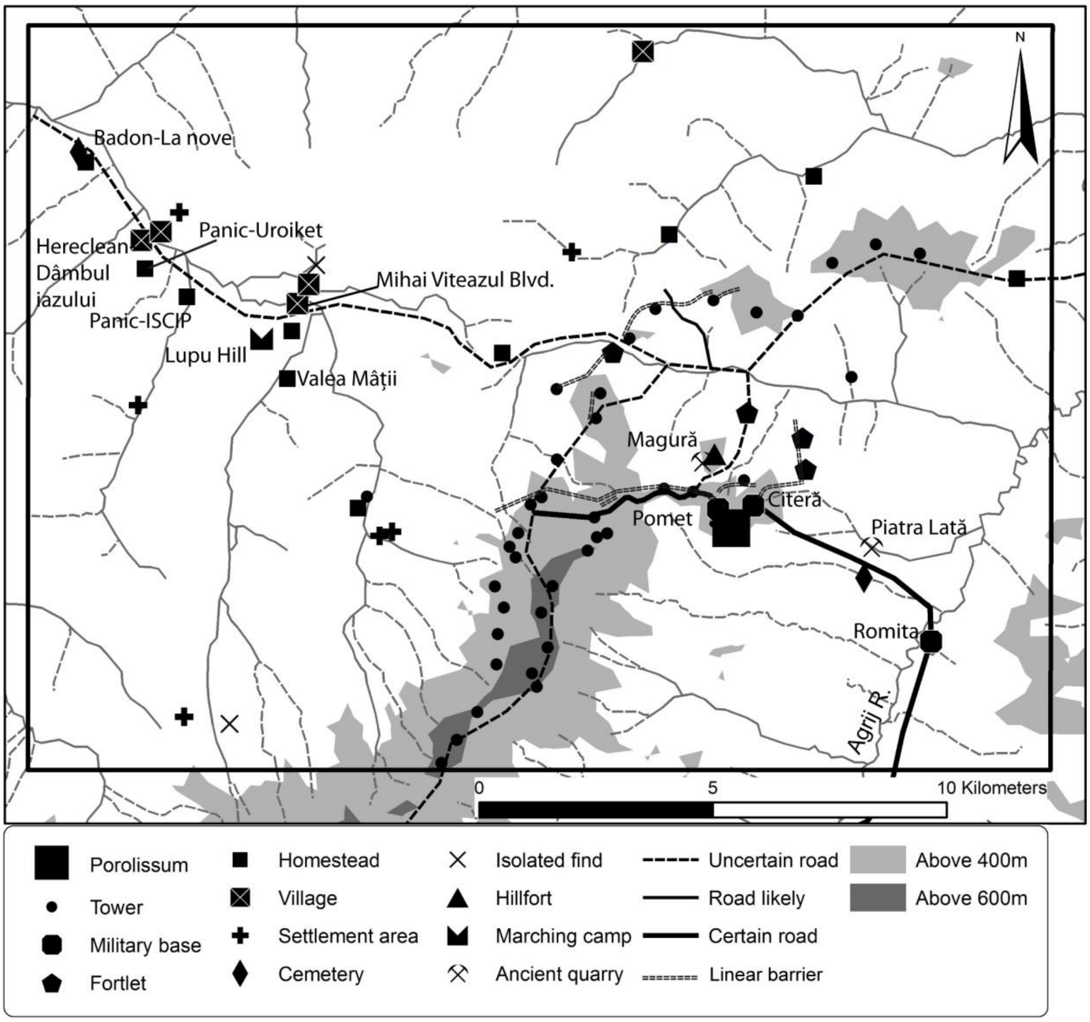


Figure 6.3: Roman period activity in the Meseş Gate.

Mirşid (Matei *et al.* 2001; Matei 1980: 13-14) and Tăneiul lui Winkler in Zalău (Matei 1980: 22). In the village of Ortelec, which is part of modern Zalău, Dacian pottery was collected from two points, one of them which spans an area of 25,000 m^2 (Matei 1980: 15). Two Republican *denarii* were found in modern Zalău, though this does not prove pre-Roman period habitation (Pop 2008: 62). These are all areas which were subsequently inhabited in the Roman period, demonstrating probable continuity in some areas of the countryside. This suggests that settlements were located at some distance away from the hillforts abutting the Meseş Mountains.

The presence of Republican *denarii* is a good measure of how well-connected an area was with more extensive Roman networks to the south. Silver hoards containing Republican coins are found at Măgura and also at a point to the north near to the pass at Jibou. Another hoard was discovered at Mirşid containing silver jewellery. Isolated finds of these coins were found at Porolissum, though these were probably not brought to the location by pre-Roman activity, and at two locations along the northwest side of the mountains. Silver coins and hoards are a common occurrence for hillforts, but the presence of these in the countryside, some distance away from the hillforts is interesting, especially the hoard at Cuceu. These finds demonstrate that in the pre-Roman period not only the pass itself, but the whole area along the mountains was connected to networks reaching at least to Pannonia via the Salt Road.

The installation of the Roman *limes* system, consisting of forts, fortlets, towers, earthworks, stone walls and military personnel was built upon a comprehensive understanding of the natural terrain (Gudea 1979; 1997; Matei 1997)). The fact that two forts at Porolissum were established in the vicinity of two hillforts is a testament to the importance of this natural pass as well as the fact that the Romans were building upon existing configurations to assert control (Fig. 6.3).

Military camps have been detected as far north as Satu Mare (Matei and Gândele 2004). All of the camps are dated to the Trajanic phase of Roman occupation as operations commenced to secure the area beyond the mountains. This period probably also saw the capitulation of Şimleu. The fact that this period was brief is attested by the fact that at Lupu Hill in Zalău, two semi-sunk structures of the second to third century were set directly upon the infilled ditch of a camp associated with the Trajanic phase. Both of the structures are interpreted as dwellings and are part of a larger village, complete with burials (Matei *et al.* 2004; Matei and Pop 2005).

After this, formal administration was established at Porolissum. Evidence at Măgura indicates that the hillfort was inhabited in the early days of the conquest, probably before the formal base at Porolissum was constructed (Gudea *et al.* 1986: 126-128). Some time shortly after the conquest, two timber forts were established at Porolissum on Citeră Hill and on the slope of Pomet Hill where the later *municipium* was situated (Matei 1996). Later the decision was made to consolidate, and a new auxiliary fort was established on the top of Pomet Hill, in conjunction with a substantial linear *vicus* to the north along the road. In AD 213 the fort was re-built in stone, coinciding with the Severan grant of *municipium* status to the associated settlement (Gudea 1997d).

The system of watchtowers along the peaks of the Meseş Mountains was developed in conjunction with the establishment of Porolissum as a central military base. One function of some of these towers may have been to guard specific resources such as water or mines, as the watchtowers of imperial *metalla* (*cf.* Friedman 2008: 22-24). The full extent of the aqueduct to Porolissum has not been traced, but it is known that it originates somewhere in the adjacent Meseş Mountains, where a number of towers have been located. Between the line of forts along the Almaş River and the line of watchtowers south of Porolissum no settlements are attested in any period (Figs. 6.2 and 6.3). If this is indicative of a real situation then it illustrates the stifling effect of military supervision directed behind the *limes*, ranging from strict supervision to military harassment that could have spanned across the immediate hinterland of the frontier.

This situation does not seem to have significantly changed pre-Roman settlement patterns immediately on the other side of the Meseş Mountains. Further northwest, however, a number of settlements and villages are attested in the modern

areas of northern Zalău, Panic and Hereclean. In some ways, this evidence may be a reflection of large salvage excavations in the face of industrial development. Further south in Zalău, archaeological investigations have been rather limited, but have not produced much evidence for habitation in any of the periods concerned. However, there are reasons to believe that this actually may reflect the reality of the Roman period. The larger villages along with a number of other homesteads appear to cluster around the Zalău River which flows from the Meseş Mountains into the Crasna, circumventing Şimleu on the way to Pannonia. In the absence of roads, this river may have been one of the most efficient ways to transport people and goods west from the Meseş Gate to the west. These villages which show no indication of pre-Roman habitation appear to have been an artefact of an increase in traffic along this route.

The high representation of cattle bones at settlements, the implicit need for draft animals, and low arable productivity for the type of crops desired by the Roman army suggest that a large amount of undeveloped land around Porolissum and even Romita may have been used as pasture. Gudea and Tamba (2001: Fig. 79) calculated that for the stone phase of Porolissum, *c*. 1004 ha of meadow for hay and *c*. 565 ha for barley cultivation would have been required per year for horses and pack-animals associated with the military (as opposed to *c*. 694 ha for cereal cultivation for the soldiers). Regardless of accuracy, the figures demonstrate the considerable land investment that the army had to make for its animals. Feeding and pasturing cattle in addition to horses and pack-animals placed a more considerable demand on the space.

Nevertheless, a map of ‘old forests’ indicates that the Meseş Mountains and most of the area around Porolissum may have been only partially or temporarily cleared, a situation which is not conducive for cattle grazing (Fig. 6.4). The area to the north along the Zalău River by contrast may have either been deforested or bare in

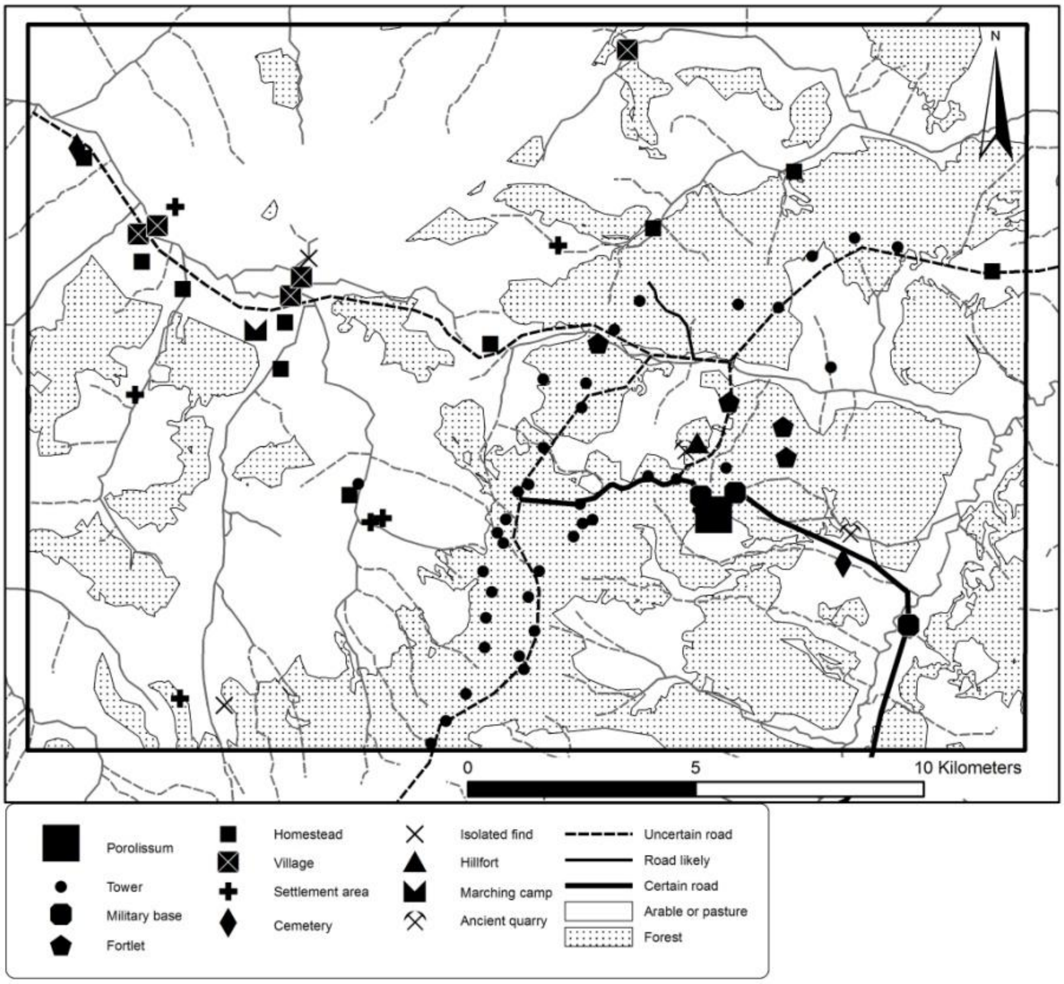


Figure 6.4: Roman period land-use in the Meseș Gate

antiquity. Particularly relevant here is the mention a brief passage by Cassius Dio. Following the Marcomannic Wars, Commodus made a formal prohibition regarding the *limes* Porolissensis:

> Commodus granted peace to the Buri when they sent envoys. Previously he had declined to do so, in spite of their frequent requests, because they were strong, and because it was not peace that they wanted, but the securing of a respite to enable them to make further preparations; but now that they were exhausted he made peace with them, receiving hostages and getting back many captives from the Buri themselves as well as 15,000 from the others, and he compelled the others to take an oath that they would never dwell in nor use for pasturage within forty stades of their territory next to Dacia.
>
> Cassius Dio lxxiii. 3

The fact that settlement or pasturing was prohibited here implies that it probably was occurring in the proximity. Previous chapters have already shown that in the area there were indeed styles of architecture, ceramics and rituals that are distinct from pre-Roman types, and have much more in common with Northern Europe, supporting the suggestion that the Buri had settled near the Meseş Gate. This is the only area where there are contemporary settlements within 3 km from the line of towers. In all other areas of the *limes*, there is no contemporary settlement which has been found so close to the line of watchtowers. In addition, the evidence for an animal enclosure at Hereclean-Dâmbul Iazului and a byre-house indicates sedentary or semi-sedentary stock-raising in the area, strategies which are known to have been employed in Northern Europe also.

The chronology of some of the settlements suggests that the Roman presence to the south actually helped to attract settlement in the river valley of Zalău, which is a good location for both cultivation and pasturing cattle. Salvage excavations at Lupu Hill in the north of the modern town indicate that a short while after the Romans established a temporary military camp there in the conquest phase of the province, a number of settlements were established in its ruins (Matei *et al.* 2004; Matei and Pop 2005). A number of the settlements within the area of Zalău are located in the flat floodplain. Features interpreted as storage pits were excavated at two of these (Panic-I.S.C.I.P. and Zalău-Valea Mâţii), indicating that they were probably utilised on a permanent basis. These were perhaps the result of the expansion of mixed agricultural strategies in this area, including pasturing cattle alongside intensive cultivation of the river valley.

The potential market at Porolissum would have made cattle-raising a profitable enterprise. The growth of this form of land-use in the Roman period may help explain some of the settlement growth to the north of Zalău. If cereals and cattle were traded to the inhabitants of Porolissum from across the *limes*, where did such transactions take

place? Entering Porolissum along the road, it was likely that they would have to pay a tax at the customs house. If demand for cattle were great enough, as the evidence potentially suggests, then it would have made much more economic sense to interact with soldiers directly, avoiding unnecessary transaction fees. Within the Roman period, a small flat area lay just beyond the stone fortification built to demarcate the extent of military control. Sondages in this area have revealed a number of important finds, including an intricate silver dagger, now in the Zalău Museum (Matei, pers. comm.). Though more research needs to be carried out in this area to understand it better, the idea that it was utilised for (unofficial?) market transactions is appealing for both practical and economic reasons.

In the post-Roman period, parts of Porolissum continued to be utilised. All the forts along the Meseş Mountains were abandoned, but the lack of investigation into associated settlements does not allow us to know if the evacuation of the troops left any civilian constituents. To the north of the former *limes*, habitation is certain at Valea Mâţii in Zalău, where fragments of wheel-made pottery were recovered which have fourth century analogies (Matei 1979a: 486-487). Because of the ambiguous chronology of Free Dacia, post-Roman habitation is uncertain but suspected to continue at all of the settlements which were inhabited in the Roman period (Matei and Stanciu 2000: 9-10).

Coinage indicates that outside of Porolissum, coins were not flowing into the Meseş Gate much beyond the rule of Gallienus according to Reece's (1991: 12) phasing and therefore not long after the withdrawal of the troops from Dacia (Găzdac 2002) (Fig. 6.5). Two coin hoards found in the complex of Jupiter Dolichenus at Porolissum both have closing dates of around 250 (Gudea and Tamba 2001: 35-37). The coins from the amphitheatre end at 249 and at the fort in 260 (Găzdac 2006). Stray coins (17 total)

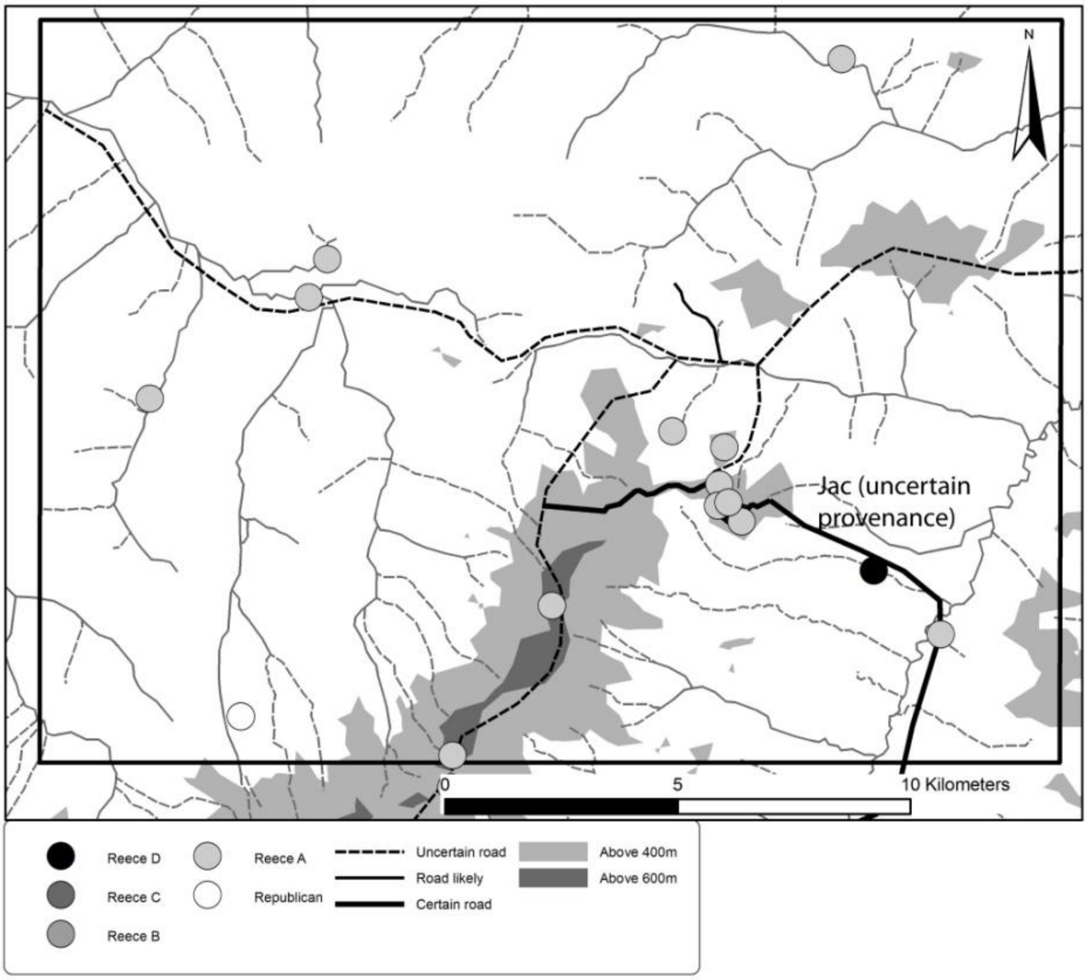


Figure 6.5: Latest coins at settlements according to Reece's (1991: 12) phasing at the Meseş Gate; Phase A: before AD 260; Phase B: AD 260-296; Phase C: 296-330; Phase D: 330-402.

issued between AD 293 and 383 were found in the vicinity of Porolissum, illustrating the effect of intervention across the Danube in the south under Constantine (Găzdac 2006). Interestingly, coins from this period only made their way up into the former towns of Roman Dacia, indicating the continuity of communication networks. These may have been used for commerce, but they may also have been simply symbols of distant connections to the Roman Empire.

The same features of the landscape continued to be important in the post-Roman period, namely Porolissum and the Zalău River. Divisive arguments over the nature of the post-Roman social landscape centre on the nature of local leaders and the

relationship to the Roman order. Here symbols which are used in other areas and periods to demonstrate ties to Roman authority, such as coins, medallions, brooches and rings are not found. The richest hoards of the post-Roman period are found much further to the south, and though none of them contain coins, they do include symbols of power deriving from Rome (see 6.3. and 6.4). In the Meseş Gate area, any remaining urban elite may not have expressed their influence through wealth and symbols of authority (or the ability to dispose of it by burial), but through relationships to the more local, now-depopulated centre of Porolissum. This is supported by the continued use of burial rituals and locations as demonstrated in the previous chapter. It also is no coincidence that a former Roman temple was chosen to host a Christian basilica (see 5.5). Re-use of many of the settlement areas along the Zalău River in the sixth through 11th centuries, including the installation of a cemetery and a system of fortifications, signals the gradual shift in power from this centre to Zalău in the medieval period (Băcueţ-Crişan and Băcueţ-Crişan 2003: 28-81)

6.2. The Şimleu Depression

The most prominent feature of the Şimleu Depression is the huge volcanic summit of the Şimleu Hills. It is surrounded by relatively low altitudes in comparison with the Meseş Mountains and Seş (Plopiş) Mountains which define its southeast and southwest edges, respectively. The Crasna River is just to the south of the summit and its tributaries are fed by streams from the mountain ranges to the south and east, creating a number of deep river valleys.

In previous chapters it was noted that settlement in this region was characterised primarily by agglomeration of settlement around the Şimleu Hills and a preponderance of small isolated homesteads in areas at lower elevations near to rivers in the Roman

period. Architectural forms were represented by surface post structures or semi-sunken structures, both with and without posts. The rite of burial was rarely practiced in any period, but when it was it consisted of small dispersed cremations.

Although the site of Şimleu has been famous ever since the discovery of rich post-Roman hoards, only in recent years has excavation clarified a number of issues (Pop 1999a; 1999b; 2009; Pop *et al.* 2000; 2001; 2002; Pop *et al.* 2007; Pop and Bejinariu *et al.* 2004; Pop and Csok *et al.* 2004; Pop and Culic 2008; Pop *et al.* 2008; Pop and Marchiş *et al.* 2009; Pop and Sana *et al.* 2009). Excavation has mostly concentrated on the hillforts of Observator and Cetate, but salvage excavations within the modern town at the base of the hills have contributed a great deal to the understanding of the antique landscape as a whole. One of the major advantages to treating the Şimleu area as a study region is that unlike areas within the Roman Empire there is no favouritism shown toward settlements constructed with roof tiles and bricks.

6.2.1. Settlement trends and the social landscape

The nucleation of settlement agglomeration in the area of the Şimleu Hills is markedly more conspicuous in the Late Iron Age than in the Roman period (Fig. 6.6). A total of six settlements are attested outside of the fortified area and north of the Crasna River. A few other settlements are attested to the south, but none to the north of the Şimleu Hills.

By examining the relationship of Late Iron Age settlement and activity to slope, a subtle but important pattern emerges that is not repeated in the Roman period (Fig. 6.7). The lack of evidence for settlement on regular, flat surfaces around the Şimleu Hills, it appears that most, if not all settlement activity was restricted to hill slopes with high grades. We might envision two inter-related reasons for this. First of all, this kept

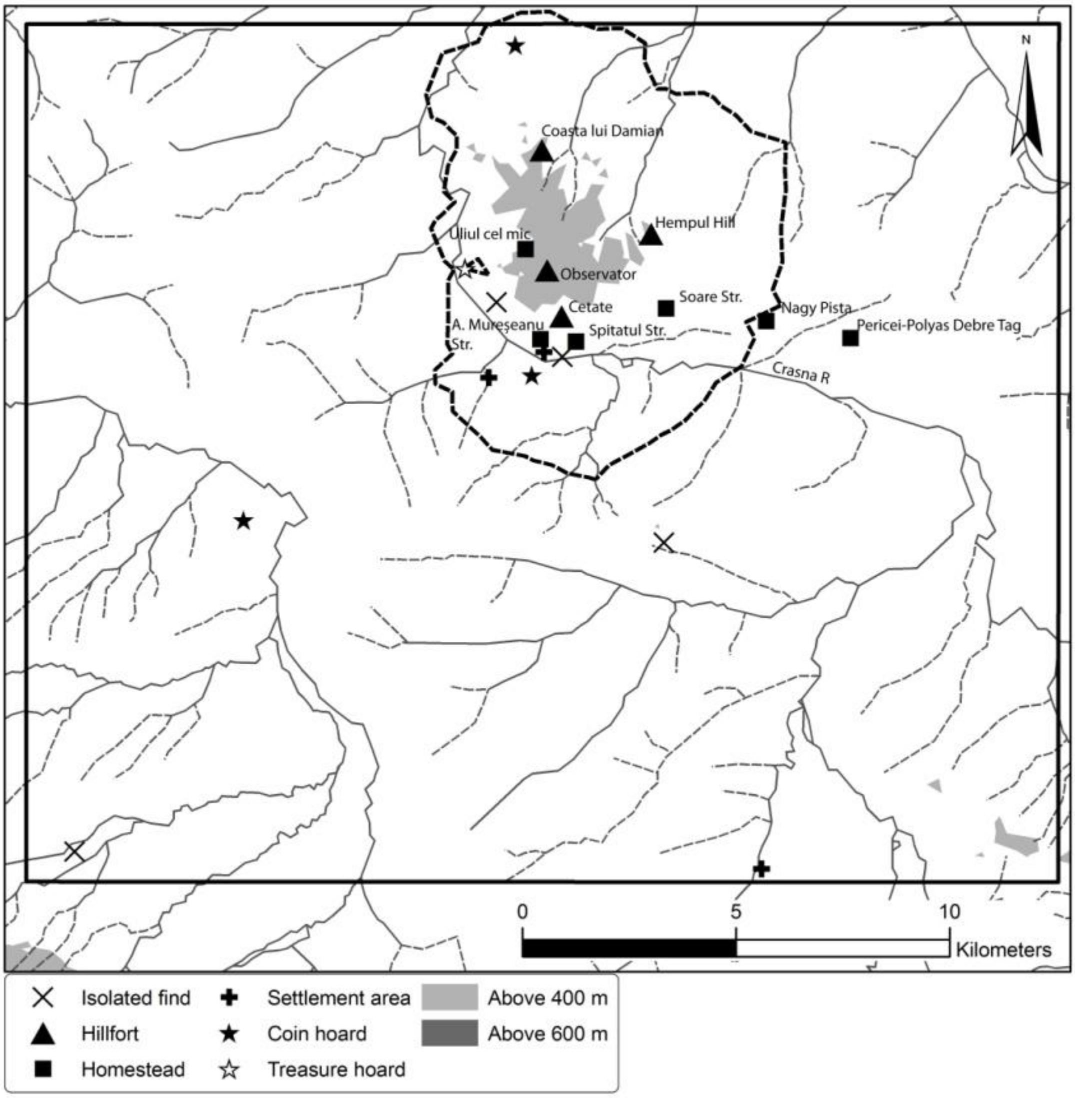


Figure 6.6: Late Iron Age activity in the Şimleu Depression.

the largest areas of the settlements away from the best agricultural land in the floodplain, where there was also a risk of flooding. This would fit a model for collective ownership of the arable land in the Crasna floodplain below the hill. These locations also gave an impression of a visible relationship between Şimleu-Cetate and its associated settlements. The audience for this would have been the individuals travelling along the ancient Salt Road that runs from the Meseş Gate up to the southern part of the Şimleu Hills before turning northward. Even the surface finds at Cotnari Street, a significant distance away from the hills, is on land sloping down into a river valley.

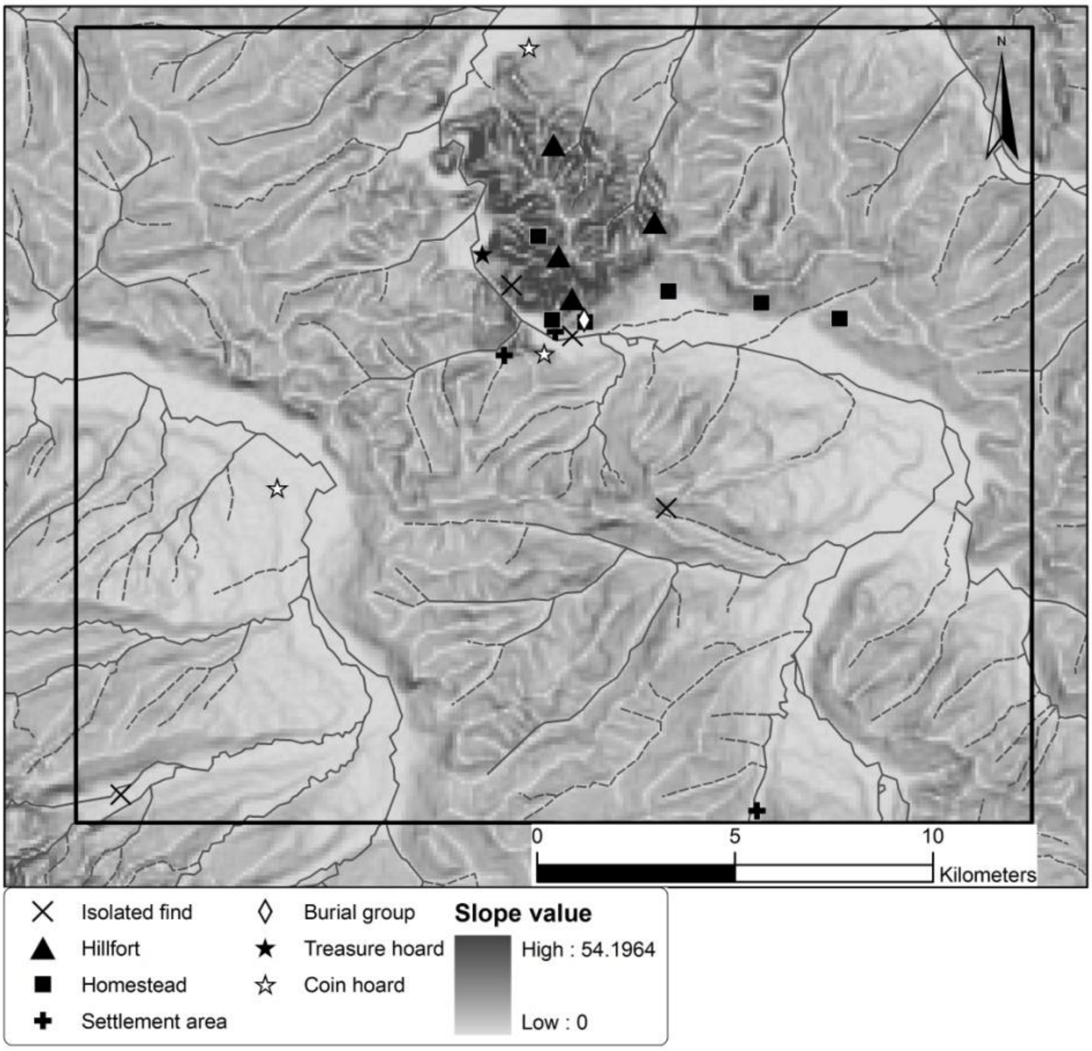


Figure 6.7: Slope and Late Iron Age activity in the Şimleu Depression.

Besides buildings, burials and pits along the slopes of Uliul cel Mic, discussed in the previous chapter, were also highly conspicuous. Visual association with the hillfort established the symbolic boundary between those who were entitled to cultivate the land and those who were not.

From the second to third centuries settlement appears to spread out toward the south of the Crasna River (Fig. 6.8). The pattern is significantly less dense and is without many exceptions focused on rivers and higher order watercourses. Settlement areas are positioned at almost regular intervals along the Barcău and the Mortauta Rivers, though this distribution may reflect some imprecise spatial information. In the

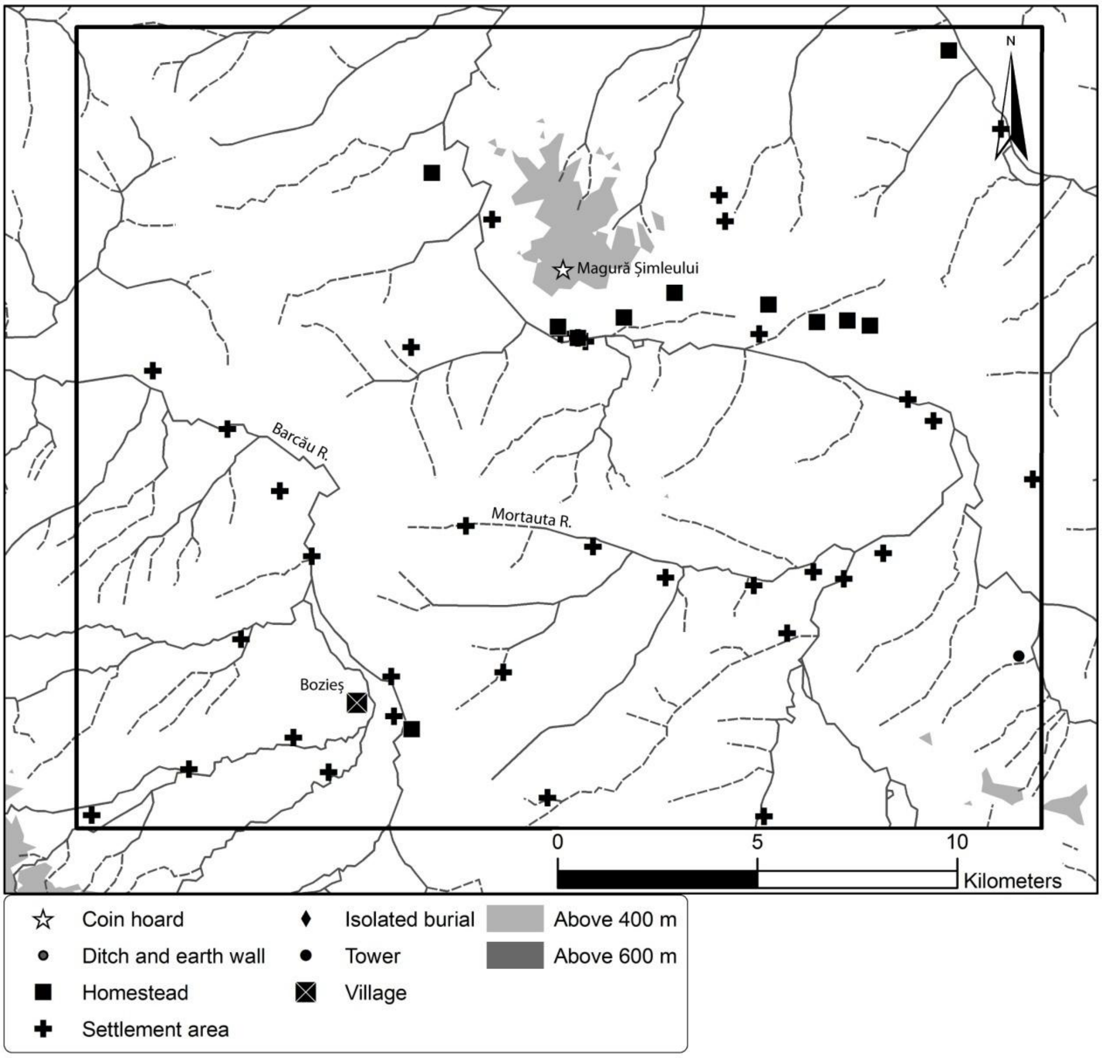


Figure 6.8: Roman period activity in the Şimleu Depression.

case of the Mortauta, all of these are positioned on the south side of the river, as if the river was serving as some kind of boundary. If it assumed that most of these settlements were contemporary, then this spacing can hardly be a random pattern. Neighbours would have to negotiate agreements over land-use. This appears to be the initiative of a local community settled along the river, rather than the result of a central planning authority.

Although the town of Şimleu has had a long history of research, there are few signs of settlement beyond the confines of the modern town, and only a few of these beyond the Crasna River, a strange fact considering that it also followed the main

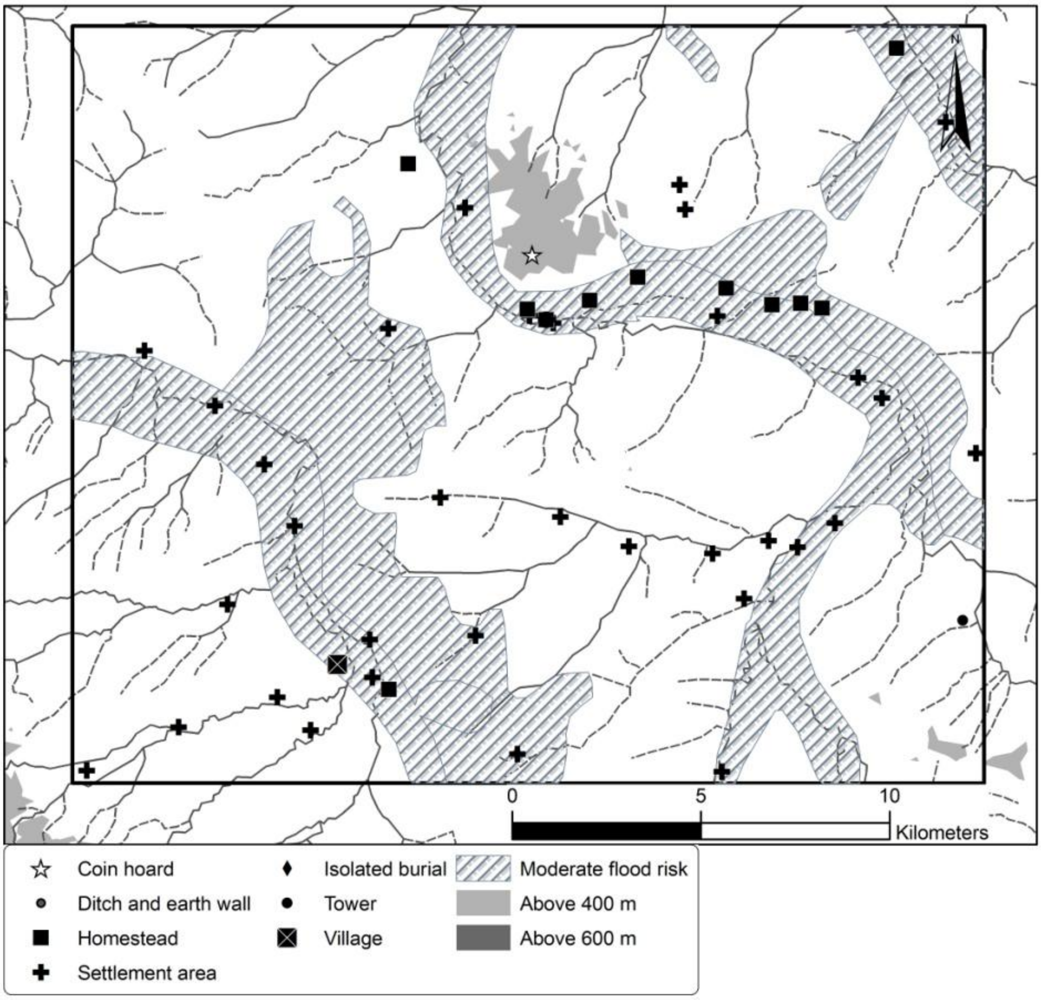


Figure 6.9: Water risk and Roman period activity in the Şimleu Depression.

communication route through Free Dacia throughout the entire period under examination. Even allowing for less durable architecture, the traces of which could have disappeared over the centuries, the fact that in only two instances have Late Iron Age pottery been found in the proximity of the river is enigmatic, given its ideal properties for the cultivation of cereals. The reason for this is probably part functional and part symbolic. The Crasna is connected to the Tisza which throughout history is well-known for getting backed up and flooding the valleys in Hungary. Modern maps of the Soviet era also indicated that the Crasna was subject to regular flooding (Fig. 6.9). Therefore, settling too close to the Crasna could have been risky. To the south there is also a mirror

pattern of settlement along the Mortauta, which appears to respect the river as a boundary as well. A single isolated find in between these rivers is all that fills the apparent space. Unless new evidence indicates the presence of settlement within this space, it seems reasonable to suggest that the Crasna and the Mortauta served as both communication routes and boundaries in regards to the territories of Şimleu.

The settlement pattern in the Şimleu region may signal a shift in agricultural practices from the Dacian to Roman periods. The alluvium of the river valleys is much better suited to cereal cultivation than the slopes of Şimleu. New settlements there can be interpreted as increasing utilisation of the agricultural potential of the river valleys, but also indicate the increasing importance of these as communication routes. These are related, since there is a similar pattern around Zalău. With this new development, however, came risk. Within the proximity of the Şimleu Hills six settlements (three dating only to the Late Iron Age and the rest dating from the Late Iron Age to the Roman period), some with kilns and storage pits, and six settlement areas are located within an area of moderate flood risk due to inundation of Crasna River and the steep hillslopes. While this is not out of place with the shift to lower altitudes in other areas of Dacia in the Roman period, it is possible that some of these may have served as seasonal habitations, such as those of the Tisza floodplain (Gillings 1997: 170-173).

Also notable is that in the Roman period no new settlements appear on the sloping land which was settled in the Late Iron Age. This could mean that the land was left to be reclaimed by the broadleaf forests which cover it today in order to supply woodland products for the increasingly dispersed farmsteads in the area.

A hoard (excavated in two halves) containing Byzantine coins issued between AD 286 and 378 which were transformed into medallions is clear evidence for continued activity (or re-use) on the hill slopes in the late third and fourth centuries (Pop

et al. 2006: 101-106). No excavated settlement around Şimleu has provided conclusive evidence for continued habitation in the fourth century through brooch forms, coins, or diagnostic pottery although this is also a general problem throughout Roman Dacia.

6.2.2. Şimleu Silver and networks

The special nature of silver finds in the region allows for an interesting discussion about the nature of interaction over the course of the ancient period. Although a few gold *stateres* and silver *tetradrachmae* at Şimleu are known from the second century BC, most hoards date to the first century BC to the first century AD (Pop 2008: 24). A total of ten hoards of coins and two hoards of coins and silver jewellery are known from this micro-region, all of which include either *drachmae* from Apollonia or Dyrrachium or Roman *denarii* or mixtures of both.

It has been suggested that it was the silver, not the actual coins themselves, which was a valued commodity to the Dacians (*cf.* Chirilă and Matei 1986). According to this theory, hoarding of these prized possessions occurred in two times of crisis, during 'numerous wars' of the late second century and early first century BC and in the second half of the first century BC after Burebista's assassination, related by Strabo (vii. 3. 11). Lockyear (2004: 69-70) has alternatively suggested that equally important in the period preceding Roman occupation was the illusion of support from Rome by local leaders. A large quantity of *denarii* entered Dacia when slaves were needed between 75 and 65 BC, after which the supply dried up and imitations started being produced. These played into elite competition between hillfort centres such as Şimleu, until they became an insufficient means to play out these power struggles. They were then deliberately consumed through burial. In both cases, however, larger concentrations of silver hoards should coincide with socio-economic power (Figure 6.10).

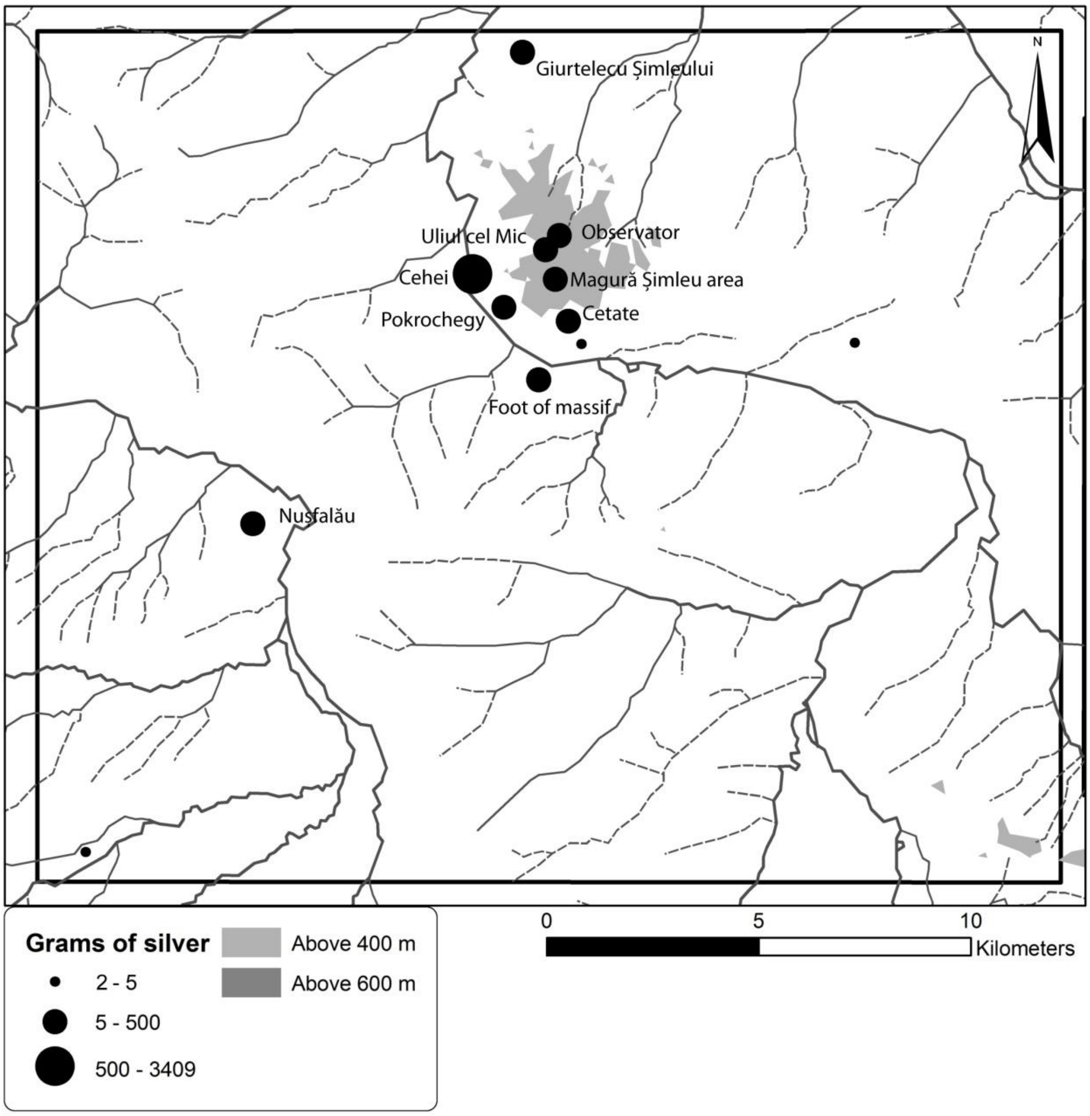


Figure 6.10: Mass of silver finds at sites in the Şimleu Depression (2-5 grams indicates isolated coin finds)

Looking at the composition of the hoards in this region, neither explanation is completely satisfactory (Table 6.1). Although a number of hoards contain closing dates which are of the early first century BC, this does not secure a date of deposition. The most we can say is that the influx of coins was interrupted around this time. Furthermore, three of the hoards contain imperial *denarii* of Augustus or Tiberius which are much later than either of these alleged crises. Lockyear's suggestion is also inadequate because not one imitation of a Roman *denarius* has been identified. All of the imitations are of *drachmae*.

Table 6.1: Pre-Roman silver hoards of the Şimleu Depression

Location	Drachmae	Denarii	Personal ornament	References
Cehei-Deluţ	445 Dyrrhachium 7 imitations	-	1 brooch 3 bracelets 1 chain	Chirilă and Matei 1986
Giurtelecu Şimleului - Valea Tăului	50 (?)	1 (?)	-	Pop 2008: 46
Şimleu-Cetate	-	52 Republican 2 Imperial	-	Pop and Găzdac 1999
Şimleu-Cetate	-	12 Republican	-	Pop 2008: 92
Şimleu-Foot of Măgura	40-50 Dyrrhachium	-	-	Chirilă et al. 1965
Şimleu-Măgura	27 Dyrrhachium 41 Apollonia 4 imitations	-	-	Pop 2008: 67
Şimleu-Măgura	4 Dyrrhachium	8 Republican	-	Pop 2008: 67
Şimleu-Măgura	2 Dyrrhachium 2 Apollonia	7 Republican	-	Pop 2008: 168
Şimleu-Observator	100 Dyrrhachium		-	Pop 2008: 85
Şimleu-Pokrochegy	-	3 Republican	-	Pop 2008: 68
Şimleu-Uliul cel Mic	-	48 Republican 16 Imperial 16 (?) unknown	4 bracelets 1 chain 8 necklace pieces 1 appliqué 1 bronze bracelet 1 bronze brooch	Pop 2008: 71-79
Şimleu-Uliul cel Mic	-	8 Republican 1 Imperial	-	Pop 2008: 94

No single explanation will do for all of the hoards, but a factor in this behaviour may be that Şimleu-Observator had connections to organised Dacian religion. Based on the inventories of some of the hoards, it seems reasonable to group these hoards with other forms of ritual depositions that were mentioned in the previous chapter. The coin hoard at the foot of Şimleu-Măgura was found inside a vase, which would not be uncharacteristic of a ritual deposition (*cf.* Bradley 1982).

Regardless of the purpose, their conspicuous presence here indicates that the whole of the Şimleu area, comprising the hills and the modern towns of Şimleu-Silvaniei and Cehei, was a central hub for the movement of goods and people between the Meseş Gate and Pannonia. Its role was partly due to geographical position, at the point where the Crasna River Valley turns north and the Barcău turns west. This

segment of the Salt Road continued to be utilised through the Roman period, and in some ways appears to have increased in importance with the decline of the hillforts to the south. While silver did appear in hillforts to the south in the pre-Roman period, it was never in great quantities. The evidence from silver hoards and isolated finds supports the notion that the pre-Roman social landscape of the Şimleu Depression was centralised, not within the hillfort but within the area of the Şimleu Massif.

Hoarding did not stop with the Roman conquest. One hoard from the Roman period is published for Măgura Şimleului, near Cehei, though the exact contents and circumstances of its discovery are uncertain (Matei and Stanciu 2000: 81). At least eight imperial *denarii* were recovered, from which only one coin of Antoninus Pius is known. Another coin of Marcus Aurelius is also attributed to the same hoard. More importantly, a very rich hoard (discovered in two phases) of gold items and coins from the fourth century was found at the base of Şimleu-Măgura. It contained almost eight kilograms of gold and silver. The first portion discovered in 1797 inside a pot, contained 14 gold coins turned into medallions, a gold earring, a gold bracelet, gold chains, gold rings, fragments of a belt and the 'chain of honour', a gold necklace with a central pendant of a smoky topaz and other pendants of weapons, grape leaves and one man in a boat (Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna 2009). The second portion, discovered in 1889, contained 20 brooches, three gold vessels, two bracelets and 24 rings. 14 gold medallions of Maximianus Hercules, Constantius, Constantius II, Valentinian, Valens, and Gratianus, indicate that the collection of these pieces possibly spanned multiple generations (Pop *et al.* 2006: 102-107). Unlike the former territory of the Roman Empire, there is very little evidence to show any interruption of occupation in settlement from the third to fourth centuries, and thus it is very likely that these hoards

are related to the sprawling settlement below the Şimleu Hills which was observed in the Roman period.

6.3. Upper Someşul Mic River Valley

The upper area of the Someş Mic River, as it emerges from the Apuseni Mountains and begins to turn northward, has shown some general archaeological characteristics in the previous chapters. First of all, settlement in all periods was concentrated near to routes, both the Roman road and the hypothetical Salt Road, and the river valley itself, emphasising its importance in terms of potential connectivity. In the Roman period villa and villa-type architecture is found distributed widely over the entire area. Equally important are stone quarries which are exploited on a large scale.

It is easy to become preoccupied with the town of Napoca in this region when interpreting the rich and varied settlement patterns. A number of important geographical factors made it well-suited for developing a hinterland full of settlements with villa and villa-type architecture. However, in order to understand the development of settlement in this area in the Roman period, we cannot place all of the emphasis on a single nucleated settlement. The road system, salt mines to the west and the uplands to the north and south of the town are as important to its development as the imperial agency of Napoca; and after the Roman military and administrators departed, these factors became increasingly important.

In some ways, the understanding of archaeology in the landscape surrounding Napoca is similar to the situation around Zalău. Numerous salvage excavations within and increasingly outside of the limits of the town have taken place over past decades as new industrial complexes and shopping centres have developed on the periphery (*e.g.*

Floreşti). However, as the home of the University of Babeş-Bolyai, the landscape has benefitted a great deal more from test trenches and research excavations (*e.g.* Chinteni).

6.3.1. Settlement trends and the social landscape

Dacian activity in this area was not focused on Napoca, but a few settlements and settlement areas were located along the Nadaş River and its tributaries (Fig. 6.11). None of these dispersed settlements show any evidence of being very large, and no particular patterns are discernable regarding altitude. Furthermore, although all of the settlements and settlement areas appear to be positioned close to rivers, there appears to be a preference for the streams which flow into the Someş Mic or the Nadaş but not the main rivers themselves. This may have to do with the presence of wetlands in the vicinity of Napoca or unpredictable flooding. While it is likely that the Salt Road ran through the river valley, on account of salt resources from the suburb of Someşeni and Cojocna further east, it does not seem like it made any significant impact on settlement growth and development. In fact, based on substantial evidence for Bronze Age and early Iron Age activity, the exact opposite may have occurred. Most of the watercourses in the micro-region flow east, and so the most efficient way to move large commodities by river would have been to catch the area where the water turns to the north which eventually empties into the Someş and subsequently into the Tisza. Apahida was much better situated to receive the benefits from any commercial activity. However, the evidence does not support substantial settlement in the first century BC or first century AD. A well-known cemetery of La Tène date, containing material from both phases C and D (second century BC), was discovered along the highway running through Apahida. Roman period materials have also been found on the surface, but nothing to indicate any continuity through the two intervening centuries. The Someşul Mic River

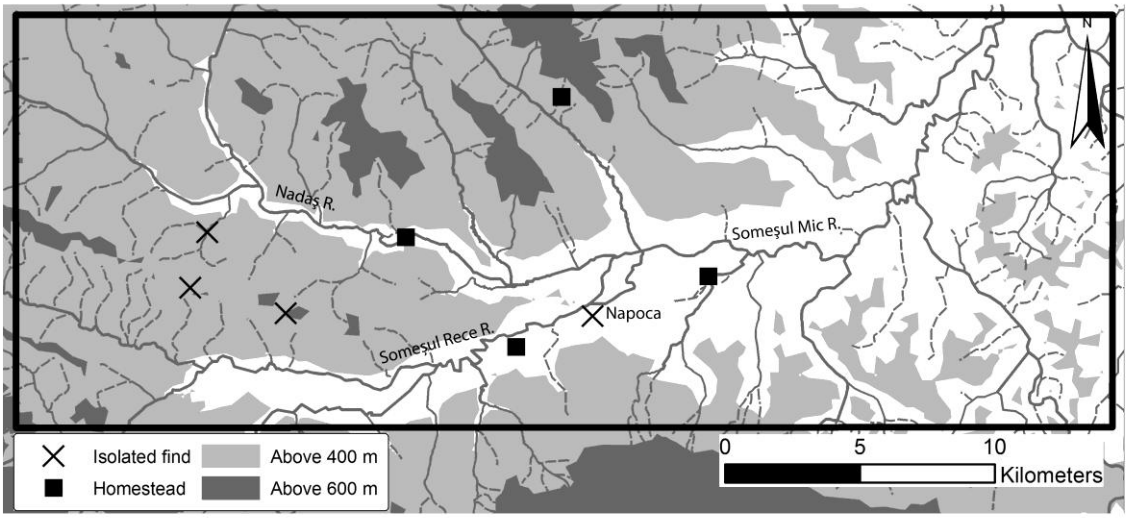


Figure 6.11: Late La Tène activity in the Someșul Mic River Valley.

Mic River Valley in the first century BC and the first century AD appears to have been characterised by small dispersed farmsteads.

The Trajanic creation of Napoca, the stimulus for settlement growth and expansion in the Someş Mic River Valley and its adjacent uplands, was based on a number of different factors. The original settlement was established at the conjunction of two important systems of roads, one running north-south connecting the *vici* of Potaissa and Porolissum, the other running east-west connecting the auxiliary forts of Gilău and Gherla (Diaconescu 2004: 118; Ursuţiu 1999: 234-238; Bogdan-Cătăniciu 1999: 67-68, figs. 2-4). Thus, Napoca served as a bridging point across the Someşul Mic River. Another important factor in the choice for the location may have been the sources of eocene limestone from Hoia Hill to the west of the town. This limestone is easily worked and resistant to effects of weathering agents, and was probably the material used to construct most monuments and stone buildings at Napoca and its surrounding area (Wollman 1996: 261). Finally, by exploiting the alluvium of the river valley as well as the dark chernozems to the north and south and the upland cambisols centred on the Nadaş River, Napoca connected an area of great agricultural potential for

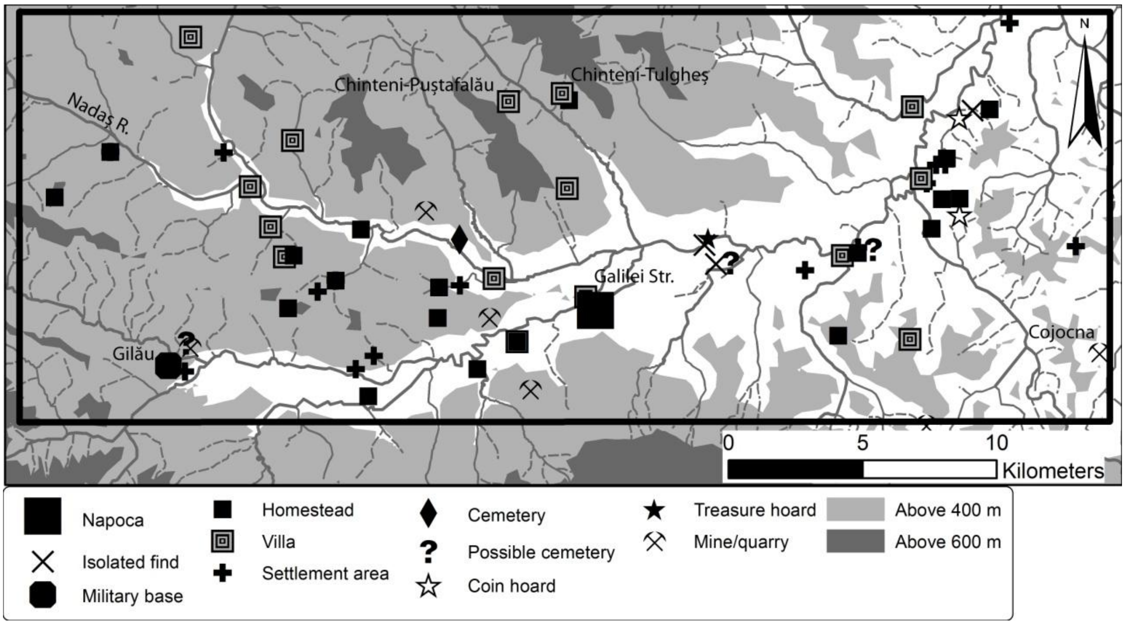


Figure 6.12: Roman period activity in the Someșul Mic River Valley.

the cultivation of cereals and vines. Understanding the latter factors should have derived from local knowledge and exploration of the landscape in the initial years of the occupation.

In general, Roman period settlement clusters in areas of good soils for cultivation irrespective of altitude (Fig. 6.12). Most of the settlements are located on relatively flat alluvium, chernozems or brown cambisols which continue their important role into the 21st century, showing resilience to degradation. Although numerous settlements appear around tributaries of the Someş Mic and the Nadaş Rivers, settlement expands into the valley of the larger water courses. Settlements manage to avoid the few areas of the Someş Mic which are prone to flooding.

Notable in this micro-region is the variety of architectural styles found in the countryside. Of the certain settlements, villa architecture is indicated at ten, villa-type architecture at nine, and 11 show no signs of elaboration (Fig. 6.13). Villas are especially clustered around the Nadaş in the west and the road running north through Apahida. These areas are characterised by both high agricultural potential and by

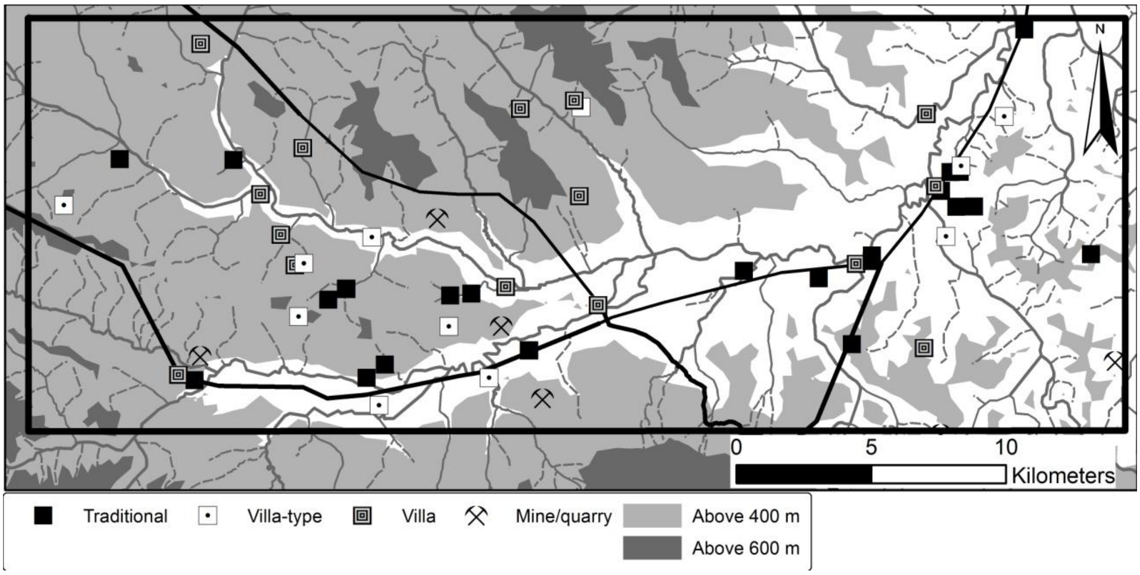


Figure 6.13: Roman period architectural elaboration in the Someșul Mic River Valley.

proximity to certain resources (stone quarries in the case of the former and salt in the case of the latter). Although most villas found throughout Dacia have an agrarian character, it is possible that the accumulation of wealth and status represented in these settlements is related to the private exploitation of these resources (Oltean and Hanson 2007: 123-124).

The appearance and the expansion of settlements with architectural elaboration is also related to opportunities for social advancement in the political institutions at Napoca. VAL(erius) CAT(ullinus) appears on a fragment of *tegula mammata* at the villa of Chinteni-Puştafalău, the same individual who became the *procurator* of Dacia Porolissensis (Mitrofan 1965: 666; Mitrofan 1974: 42). At the suburban villa at Galilei Street in Cluj-Napoca an altar to Liber Pater, *tesserae* and some imperial *denarii*, strongly linked to urban life at Napoca (Crişan *et al.* 1992: 123). The latter is particularly important since none of the other rural villas have shown any evidence for *tesserae*, though many of them have not been properly excavated.

As in other areas of Roman Dacia, in spite of the complete reorganisation of the landscape there is no conclusive evidence for centuriation. Outside the towns, roads and settlements respected hills, rivers and other features of the landscape. The orientations of published excavated burials outside Napoca and villas are wholly inconsistent. Even though this hallmark of the *adsignato* is not attested anywhere in the study area, the Ciumăfaia villa contained in it a votive altar dedicated by Aelius Iulius, *veteranus*, *ex centurione* (Mitrofan 1973: 135 and Fig. 6). This is one of the only signs of a veteran inhabiting a villa in Northwest Transylvania; but it is not enough to justify centuriation.

That these wealthier settlements belonged to native Dacians seems unlikely, given that there is no sign of an immediate pre-Roman hierarchy of settlement here and that La Tène-style handmade ceramics are only rarely found here outside Napoca. The relationship of a sunken structure from the first century AD to a villa constructed around the time of Trajan or Hadrian at Chinteni-Tulgheş is tantalising but without proper publication the connection between the two settlements is unclear (Crişan *et al.* 1992: 106). Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that the owner of small sunken structure could accumulate enough wealth in the early years of the Roman Empire to be able to build a monumental heated building which would later become a bath. The lack of any continuity from the Late Iron Age to the Roman period in these elaborate rural settlements indicates that the organisation of land tenure had changed, but also that the Dacians were not settling on this land. Whether they were exploiting it for cultivation is another matter.

With the exception of Ciumăfaia, the landscape was probably inhabited by the urban elite of Napoca, those who had advanced through political, social and/or economic ranks within or as a result of involvement in urban institutions. Napoca may not have been a large town or particularly important in imperial politics, but it was

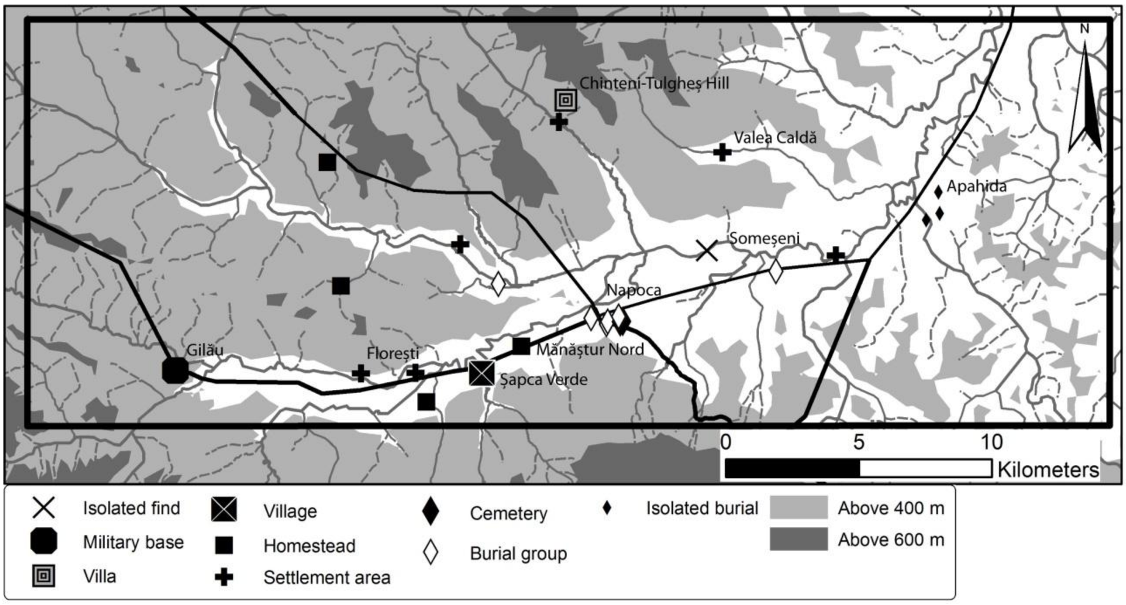


Figure 6.14: Post-Roman activity in the Someșul Mic River Valley.

clearly the impetus for an entirely new pattern of settlement which would have an important effect on inhabitants after the departure of the armies.

Settlement patterns of the post-Roman period display some of the most intriguing and unique evidence for this period in the entire study region (Fig. 6.14). Although post-260 coins are rare in the entire province, within this small area of the river valley they were found in three points. Alongside this evidence, the late coins and Roman-inspired pottery forms at Porolissum indicate that the main communication network connecting Northwest Transylvania to central Dacia and the Danube was still intact for until the beginning of the fifth century (Fig. 6.15).

As noted in Chapter 4 a new type of settlement appears in the post-Roman period, the 'suburban village'. Settlement around Napoca seems to be concentrated outside of the town, along the roads and within walking distance of the main town in four relatively large centres. One settlement area is located in Someşeni, the suburban airport area of modern Cluj-Napoca 5 km away from the centre of the Roman town. Coins of the late fourth and fifth centuries were found along the Someş Mic, as was a

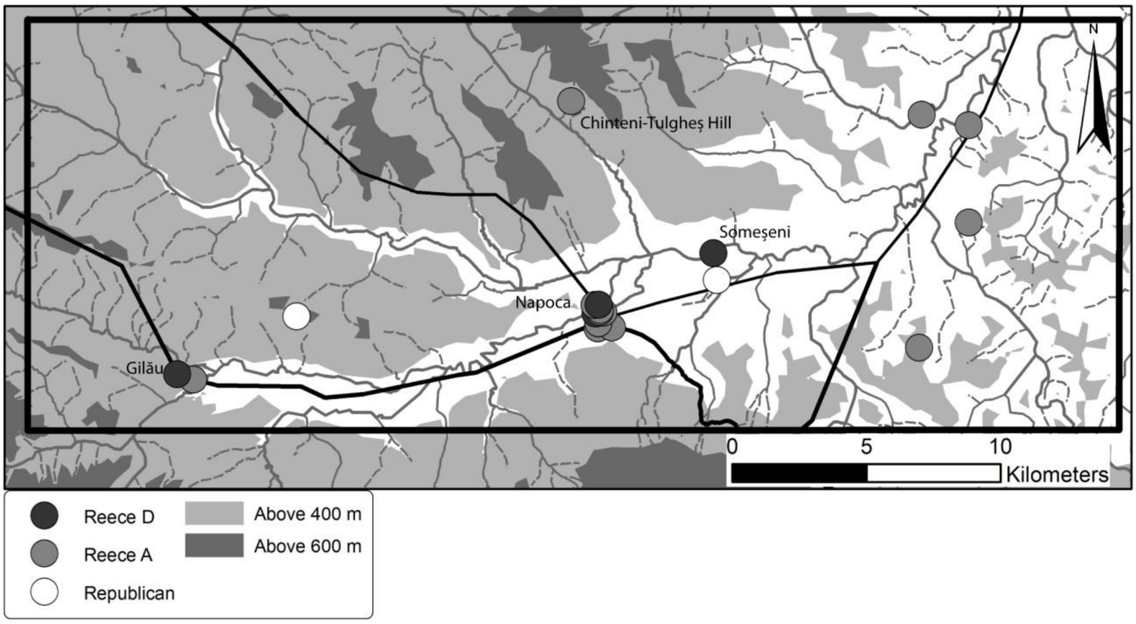


Figure 6.15: Latest coin issues in the valley using Reece's (1991: 12) phasing. Phase A: before AD 260; Phase D: 330-402.

more substantial find, a fifth century hoard of gold and almandine objects of nearly 618 grams (Crişan *et al.* 1992: 362). Further to the south, along the modern road, preventive archaeology for the construction of the airport recovered four burials dating to the fifth century, containing a silver fibula with three buttons on the head, three silver rings and beads of glass and amber. A funerary monument was also recovered from the garden of the local church and school during excavations for the new road, indicating the possibility that funerary activity associated with Napoca might have extended further east than is now generally believed or that monuments were being moved a substantial distance from the Roman town (Crişan *et al.* 1992: 362). It is important to note that this is also the location of a salty spring, though it is uncertain whether it was certainly exploited in antiquity.

Another suburban village is located at modern Floreşti to the west, where surface finds and excavated materials have indicated post-Roman settlement for a long time. Within the modern village and to the north of it, along the northern bank of a

curve in the Someşul Mic, a number of surface finds from the late third, fourth and fifth centuries have been recorded over a large area (Crişan *et al.* 1992: 201-205). A sunken house dated to the fourth century was also recorded just to the south of the modern village, although no further details are published. A few Roman finds were also recorded in the area, but nothing to indicate any substantial settlement. We have already mentioned the important fifth-century village which was recorded at Şapca Verde, which is probably related (see 4.4).

The modern village of Apahida stands just 15 km east of Napoca, the location of the Omharus burial and generally accepted as a seat of post-Roman Gothic administration (Kiss 1994). The assumption is justified on the grounds of archaeological evidence, even though frequently arguments for the importance of Apahida only rest on a single burial and its contents (see 5.1). The modern village superimposed on the settlement is also within 9 km of the salt mines a Cojocna, a resource which also seems to have attracted post-Roman populations to Potaissa.

One final area that is worthy of discussion is the Valea Caldă thanks to a remarkably informative, yet barely utilised survey of the drainage basin. Several areas were sectioned off and subjected to surface collection and sondages in order to facilitate work to combat erosion. This work revealed significant post-Roman activity both in and on the slopes of the basin. Most importantly, material of the fourth and fifth centuries was found over a greater extent than the prehistoric or Roman period materials (Lazarovici and Kalmar 1985-1986: 726-731). Although no evidence came to light of wealthy burials, a column base was found in the area indicating continuity of a settlement with architectural elaboration which is related to status in the Roman period.

Most of the archaeology falls within immediate proximity of the river or its tributaries at low elevations. With the exception of Apahida and perhaps Someşeni for

their proximity to salt resources, there are few functional advantages which would make these locations attractive above any others in the Someş Mic River Valley in the post-Roman period. In this respect, Napoca probably played a symbolic role, as association with the now derelict town which validated and propagated social power though its form had changed drastically. Whilst powerful individuals may have justified and expressed their leadership in terms similar to those of the Roman period, as the brooches in the burials may indicate, the burial practices, construction techniques, pottery, and choice for settlement location differ markedly from the Romans who inhabited Napoca.

6.4. Potaissa and its hinterland

The final micro-region is based around the foothills which begin to the west of the Arieş River, and the site of the most important military base of the Roman period in Northwest Transylvania. As shown in previous chapters, the area around Potaissa is characterised by dispersed settlement at middle and higher elevations and nucleation at Potaissa from the Roman period onward. Settlement tended to cluster around roads. Also represented are a number of settlements with villa-type architectural elaboration with legionary brick stamps.

Situated in the Arieş River Valley, Potaissa, like Napoca, became an important town in the Roman period, and the hub of development in its surrounding landscape, though that form ended up being very different. The area to the west of the Arieş River is characterised by middle and higher altitudes as the land begins to give way to the foothills of the Apuseni Mountains. One of the most distinctive geographic features of the area, even today, is the Cheile Turzii (‘Gorge of Turda’) between the Sandul and Biserică Hills which forms an important means of communication between Potaissa and

settlement within the western uplands. Equally important are other numerous narrow, uninhabitable river valleys which cut deeply through the hills and mountains, running mainly eastward and forming important routes toward Potaissa.

While investigations into the *colonia* of Potaissa have been insufficient, a number of small-scale investigations around the modern town of Turda and its municipality have taken place indicating the extent, if not the exact shape, of urban settlement and its associated cemeteries. Bărbulescu (1997) has usually given proper consideration to the immediate landscape around Potaissa, but outside of one or two kilometres of the town settlement is less well understood. This discussion builds on this understanding utilising evidence from further away, but this micro-region, more than any other, suffers from a lack of archaeological integration, making it difficult, but not impossible, to utilise for purposes of comparison and contrast.

6.4.1. Settlement trends and the social landscape

Of all the micro-regions, Potaissa contains the fewest vestiges of Late La Tène activity (Fig. 6.16). Only one certain settlement has been identified at Aiton, probably along the route of the Salt Road. A cremation burial was also located in the vicinity along with some isolated finds, indicating that Aiton may have been a more important pre-Roman centre than in later periods. A hoard, most likely of Republican *denarii* was found at Miceşti, although the contents and the precise location are uncertain (Crişan *et al.* 1992: 272). Without further archaeological intervention at Potaissa it is difficult to say much more about pre-Roman settlement patterns in this micro-region except that Potaissa did not occupy a central role in this area until the Marcomannic Wars of the Roman period.

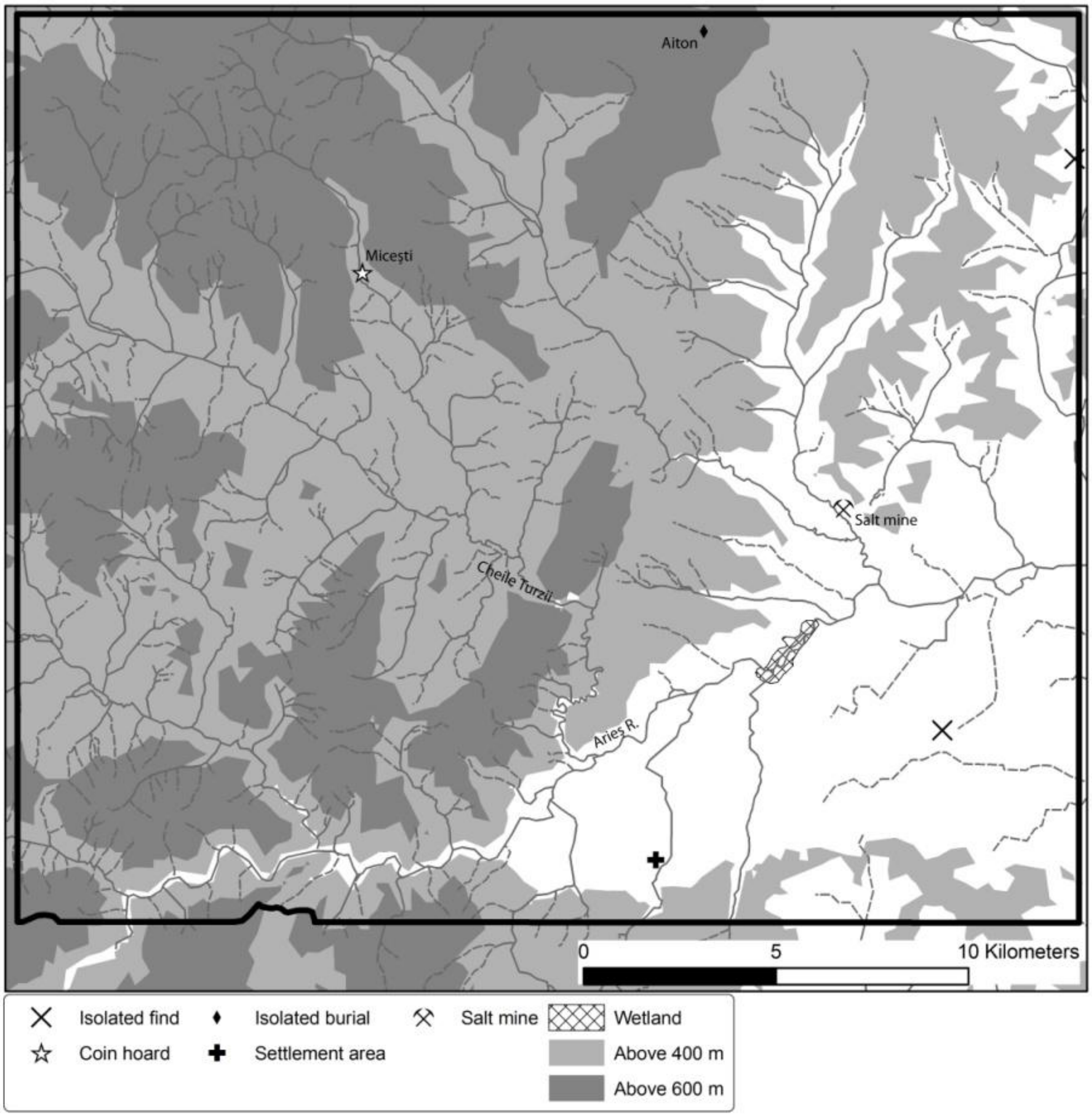


Figure 6.16: Late Iron Age activity in the Potaissa area.

With the installation of the legionary base at Potaissa near to the salt resources, settlement expands to the west and north of the base along the road. Settlements also appear in the Arieş River Valley as it enters the uplands to the southwest. A number of settlements with villa-type architecture which are a significant distance away from the legionary base as well as the road have military brick stamps.

At Aiton, where a few vestiges of Late La Tène occupation were noted, a substantial Roman period settlement appears. One building with stone foundations contained a single Dacian *fructiera* (pedestal bowl) and a stamped amphora. Four other

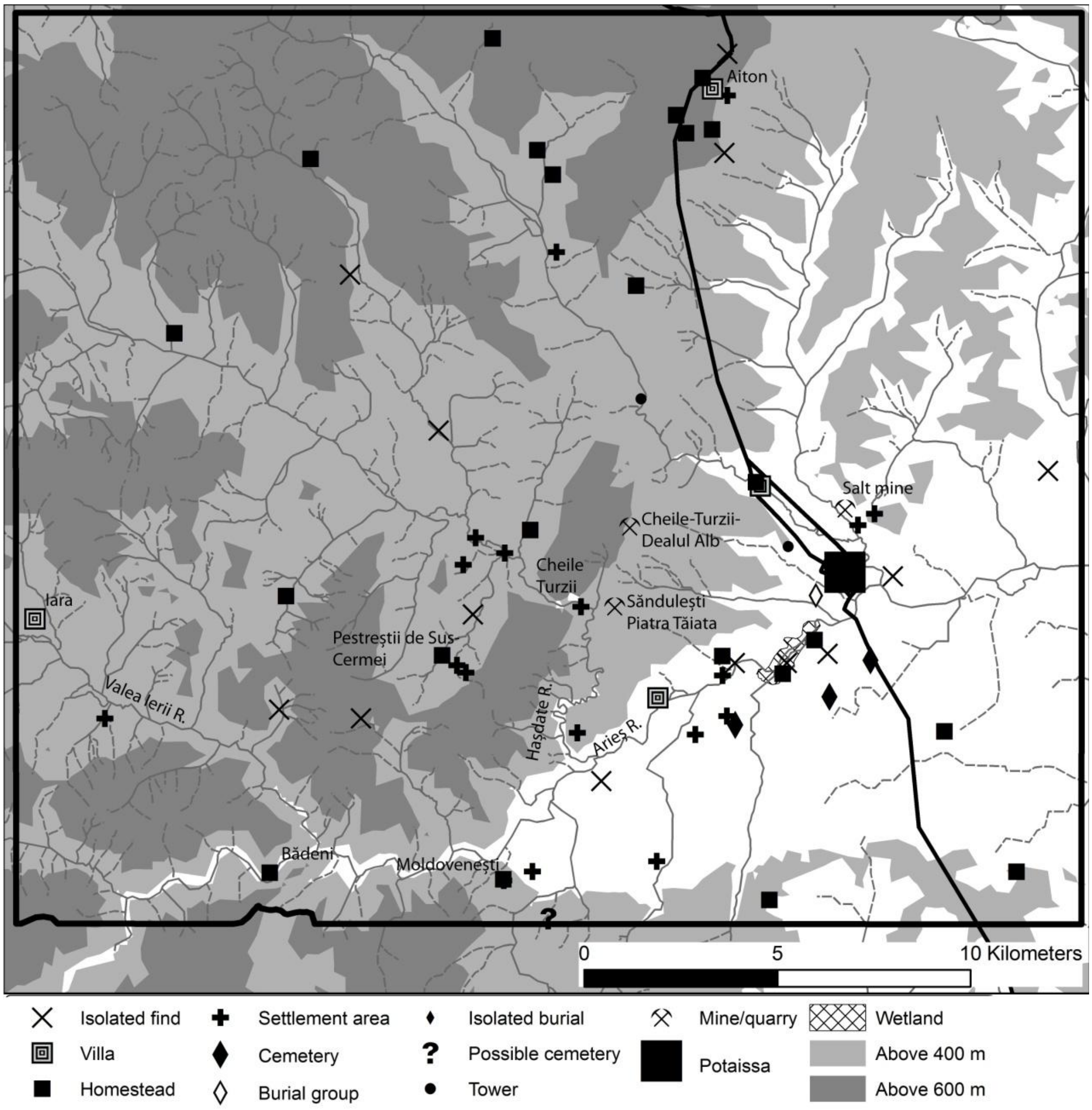


Figure 6.17: Roman period activity in the Potaissa area.

Roman period stone structures were discovered in the area of the modern village. Other vestiges indicate that this was more than a small isolated farmstead: an altar to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, terracotta statuettes of a female figure and possibly Jupiter, a brick stamped with LEG V M, and a coin to Faustina Senior all were found in the area (Crişan *et al.* 1992: 22-24). Given the great distance between Potaissa and Napoca (24 Roman miles according to the *Tabula Peutingeriana*, *c*. 26 km directly), this could be interpreted as a *mansio*, although without publication of the plans of the buildings which have been located it is difficult to support this interpretation.

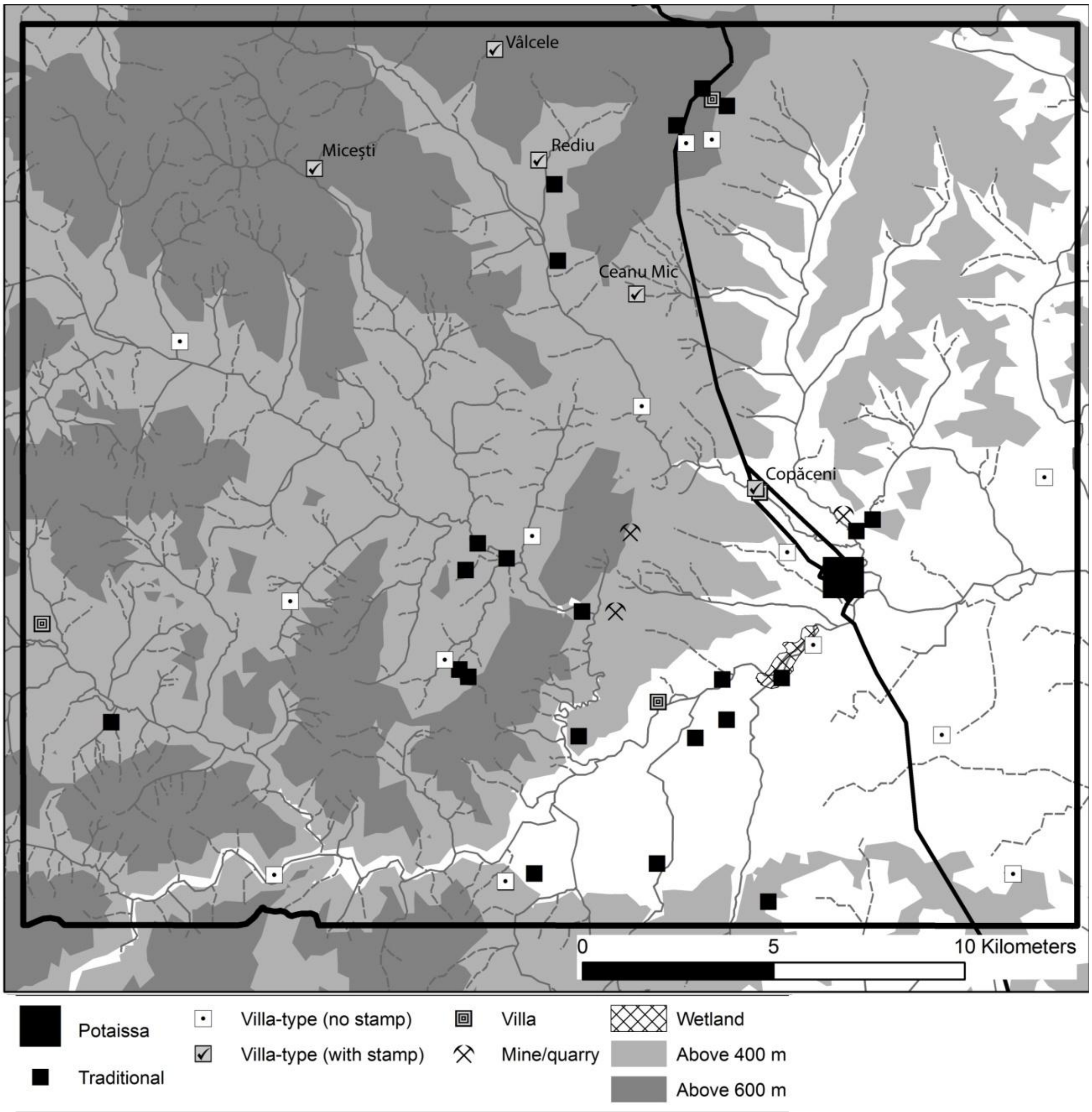


Figure 6.18: Legionary stamps at Roman settlements in the Potaissa area

Nevertheless, outside of Potaissa, Aiton appears to be one of the larger and more important settlements, in all likelihood due to its position along the road, 14 km from the centre of Napoca and 12 km from Potaissa.

A number of settlements appear to cluster on the western side of the mountains, near Cheile Turzii, possibly to exploit building stone. Few other general patterns in settlement location are discernable. Settlements appear in equal proportions in both the middle and upper altitudes. All of them are located near to streams, though these vary

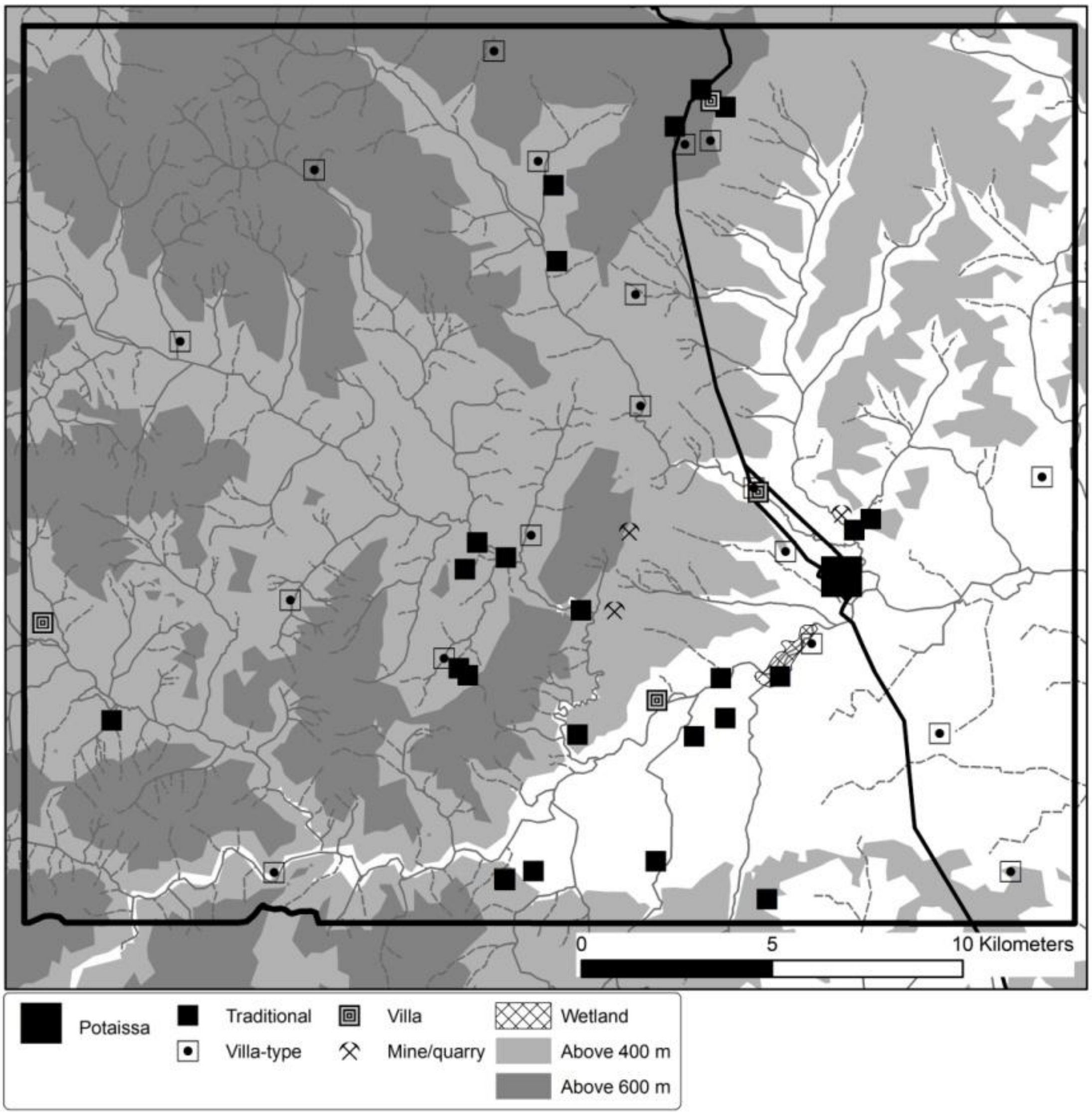


Figure 6.19: Architectural elaboration of Roman period settlement in the Potaissa area.

between major rivers, minor rivers and lower order tributaries.

Brick stamps of the Fifth Macedonian Legion appear in six locations to the north of Potaissa and to the east of the road to Napoca (Fig. 6.18). Besides a few rural locations to the north of the Roman fort of Gilău-Avicola, this is the only area where legionary stamps have been found outside of towns and military bases. This fact has not been adequately recognised in discussions about the role of the military in the countryside. In every other micro-region that has been examined, there is very little evidence that the army took any role in the construction of non-urban civilian

settlements. Besides Aiton, which may or may not be a *mansio*, these settlements are all found at least a kilometre from the main roads, and in most cases much further. The expanse in between Napoca and Potaissa appears to have been a territory in which the military from Potaissa was intimately involved. This should not come as a surprise, since soldiers were active in the surrounding landscape on a daily basis (James 2001). While a large number of soldiers were stationed in small groups away from the forts along the Meseş Mountains at fortlets and towers, at Potaissa their work outside the fort was more personal with non-combatants.

In addition, it is also important to note that villa-type architecture is found dispersed over a relatively large area to the west of Potaissa, mainly in the areas of middle altitude (between 400 and 600 m) (Fig. 6.19). Though few in number, some of these are found far away from the main road in the uplands, suggesting some pathways to the west that are not archaeologically visible. Roman brooches and coins were found at two of the settlements (Bădeni-Movila Dâmb and Moldoveneşti), and evidence for iron-working at another (Pestreştii de Sus-Cermei). *Tegulae mammatae* were found at another settlement (Iara), further to the west, indicating a hypocaust system and thus a strong indication for a villa or even a bath house, although it is interpreted as a mining settlement (Crişan *et al.* 1992: 236). This settlement might be the key for the strong representation of architectural elaboration in this area. Evidence for Roman period gold mining is present in neighbouring Băişoara.

Around the hills of Turda comprising Cetate, Zâne, and Şuia, the low floodplain with fine soil texture creates a moderate risk of flooding, but this risk was clearly worth it to capture the strategic and connective power of the location (Fig. 6.29). Besides the base of Potaissa, very few settlements in this area are located within the area of immediate flood risk. Further north, however, several homesteads are within the area of

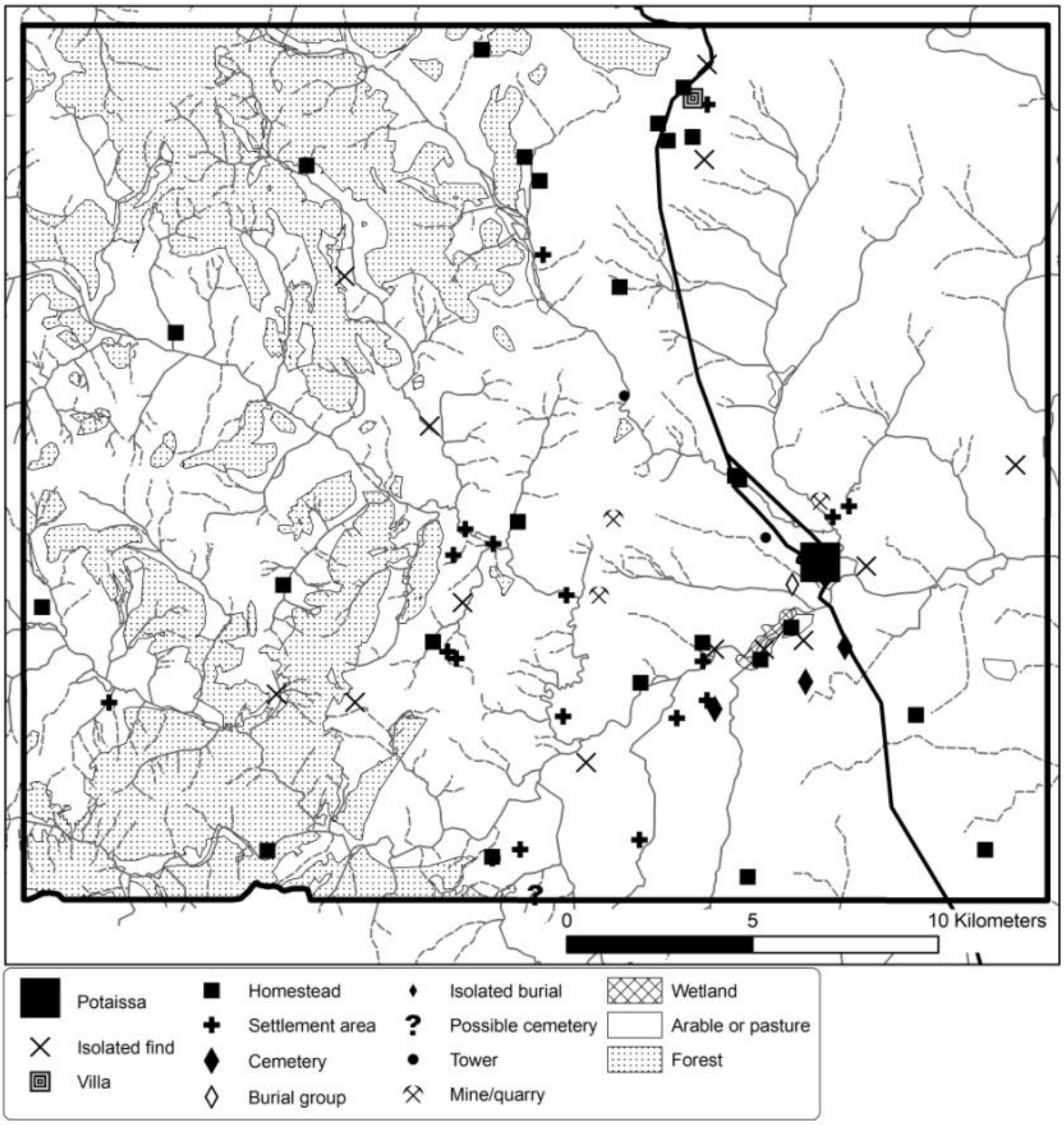


Figure 6.20: Land-use in Roman period Potaissa area.

moderate flood risk on account of slope grade and the very fine texture of the soil.

Settlement in all periods tends to stay on the fringes of the forested areas to the west; but archaeological vestiges on the fertile chernozem to the northeast of the town are especially rare (Fig. 6.20). Given the importance of salt in all periods alongside its agricultural potential, it is very strange that settlement thins out away from the Roman road and the town. The more substantial concentrations of settlements are found within the alluvium of the river valley of the Arieş and in the west sector along the edge of the

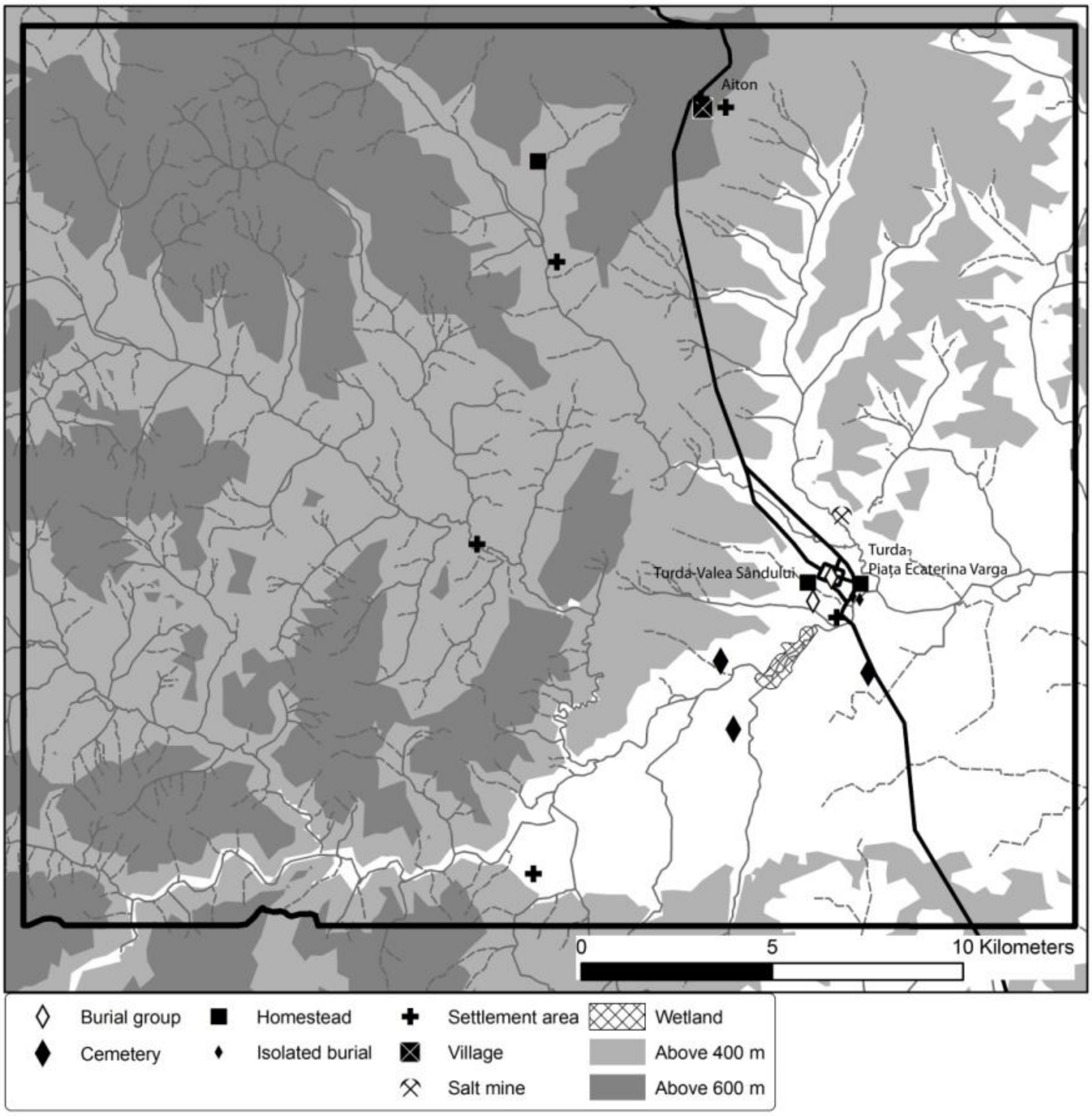


Figure 6.21: Post-Roman activity in the Potaissa area.

river valley on the mixed brown podzols between the edge of the forests and the mixed brown soils of the foothills of the Apuseni Mountains. This implies the gradual upslope creep as a result of forest exploitation for the creation of fuel, arable land and pasture.

Settlement near to the forests in the foothills of the mountains is a trend that continues into the post-Roman period (Fig. 6.21). Considerable demand for wood and deforestation of the area may help to explain the growing number of settlements in this area. These are not all small homesteads, as a number utilise bricks and terracotta roof

tiles and there is at least one possible villa at Iara. Besides fuel for production of terracotta tiles and bricks, forests offered grazing ground for pigs, an animal which is attested, though in no great quantity, at a number of military bases.

In the post-Roman period, there was clearly settlement somewhere around Potaissa as attested by numerous signs of fourth century burials, but not within the legionary fortress where the two rich burials were located. Traces of settlement to the west completely disappear, but a couple of settlements appear to continue to the north. These may have more to do with Napoca than with Potaissa. Again, coinage in the countryside disappears after Gallienus. Only coins within the modern town and to the south and west post-date Reece’s phase A.

6.5. Conclusions

This chapter has showed the interaction between resources and environmental factors, human agency and social interaction in four micro-regions. Although different levels of archaeological intervention, varying methodologies and other factors make real comparisons difficult, some important comments can be made.

First of all, the four micro-regions have shown that the development of the landscape in the Roman period cannot be attributed solely to the two extremes of the Roman army and native Dacians. Both played important but varied roles, but in doing so it is important not to de-emphasise the roles of the emerging urban elite (many of whom were probably veterans and immigrants), enterprising tradesmen and cattle farmers from beyond the frontier. Dacians played varying roles in the settlement developments in the Roman period. Although La Tène style handmade wares exist at numerous settlements in the second century, there is no evidence of any substantial pre-Roman habitation at Napoca or Potaissa. With the exception of Chinteni-Tulgheş, which

is uncertain at best, there is no evidence that provincial Dacians were the beneficiaries of a Roman ‘landscape of opportunity’, to use Mattingly’s (1997) term (see 7.1 for more discussion). Nevertheless, continuity is suggested at a few places: most importantly Aiton, within the Empire and Şimleu outside of it. These centres appear to provide a foundation for subsequent Roman period settlements, but they are significantly altered in form in order to meet the demands of a new social and political order.

On the other hand, the presence and activities of the Roman army played an important part in settlement patterns far beyond its zone of control. In all likelihood, the army of occupation is responsible for the abandonment, and continued disuse, of the hillforts of Şimleu. In the Meseş Gate, the presence of the military appears to have stifled or even cleared settlement inside the mountain range, but stimulated it just on the other side of the *limes*. Active soldiers or veterans appear to have been involved in the construction of houses or the distribution of materials for this construction between Potaissa and Napoca, though there does not seem to be any evidence for an *adsignatio* for veterans. In a less direct manner, the demand for certain types of food created changes in the scale of agricultural and pastoral practices. In the Roman period of all four micro-regions there is an increasing tendency to move into alluvial river valleys, which are more conducive to cereal cultivation and to raising cattle. Also, we should not over-emphasise the placement of towns in relation to military disposition. Napoca was clearly a civilian settlement from the beginning, and there is no evidence that Potaissa was conceived as a military base before the Marcomannic Wars.

Second, nucleation and dispersal in settlement patterns vary from region to region, so that only local explanations are adequate (Table 6.2). Beyond the reach of hillforts, rural settlement of the Late La Tène was characterised by small dispersed settlement, regardless of altitude. The most distinctive characteristic of the landscape to

the southeast of the Apuseni Mountains, including the Someşul Mic River Valley and the Potaissa area, is that so very few Late Iron Age settlements have been located; and when they are, they are small circular dwellings, unenclosed and without ancillary buildings. This may have to do with an unstable pattern of settlement. Dwellings inhabited for only for a generation or two would be difficult to detect by traditional archaeological methodology. If this is indeed the case, the instability was probably caused by waxing and waning of mobility along the commercial Salt Road running through this area, caused by periods of fighting and insecurity. Unlike the Roman period, there is no indication of organised territorial boundaries or field systems, which would have allowed for a much greater freedom with regard to residential location and land-use. The Roman period, of course, changes all of this, though not uniformly. In the post-Roman period, evidence indicates increasingly dispersed settlement patterns, even around the towns in the form of 'suburban villages'; though other patterns may be obscured by the fact that people were living in Roman period dwellings and consuming the same products as before.

Table 6.2: Settlement patterns for the four micro-regions.

Location	Late Iron Age	Roman period	Post-Roman period
Meseş Gate	nucleated	dispersed	dispersed
Şimleu Depression	nucleated (high altitudes)	dispersed (low altitudes)	dispersed (low altitudes)
Someşul Mic River Valley	dispersed (low-middle altitudes)	nucleated	dispersed (focused on river)
Potaissa area	dispersed (high altitudes)	dispersed (middle-high altitudes)	nucleated

The controversy over pre-Roman settlement in river valleys was summarised in section 3.1.4. The evidence for Late Iron Age activity in the four micro-regions in this chapter indicates with certainty that settlements were present in river valleys, middle altitudes and uplands alike, with strong regional variation. At Şimleu, the southeast side of the Meseş Mountains, and the foothills of the Apuseni Mountains near Potaissa,

upland settlement and appears to have been preferred, both in small homesteads and in hillforts. However, the archaeology of the Someșul Mic River Valley and the northwest side of the Meseș Mountains indicate a preference for river valleys. Importantly, the largest non-fortified settlement in all of Northwest Transylvania currently known appears to be located next to a river near the Meseș Gate. In the Someșul Mic area, we also see settlement and activity in middle altitudes. Oltean (2007: 93) is correct in suggesting that traditional assumptions about Dacian settlement preferences are more of a reflection of site preservation than reality. This is a problem that we must be sensitive to when making sweeping interpretations about Late Iron Age settlement patterns based on distribution maps at a much larger scale.

A fourth issue brought up in this study is the relationship between settlement location (namely towns and military bases and stations) and resources. This issue is important because it is at the heart of the argument about the objectives of the Roman invasion (*cf.* Carcopino 1924). In some cases, it appears that the Romans, building on local knowledge, targeted resources. Potaissa's location appears undeniably related to the salt mine, and Napoca's proximity to quality quarries is convenient. The salt mines of Potaissa and Dej were in use in the pre-Roman period, and thus military disposition and road systems were placed accordingly. However, in several other instances, there appear to be no significant settlements or signs of military supervision, such as the silver/lead/gold mines at Iara and the salt mines of Cojocna. In both of those cases there are not even any roads for easy access of carts, making boats the most likely form of transport. It is possible that these resources were not located in the early years of occupation. As new resources were located in the countryside, the linear system of military communication developed in the early years of the occupation was not an appropriate infrastructure for large-scale exploitation. Landed individuals in the later

years of occupation may have been able to circumvent the laws of the empire if the connections between town and country were weak enough. It is likely that exploitation took the form of landowners harnessing a rural population during the latter years of occupation, as suggested by other Late Antique provincial regions (*e.g.*, post-600 northern Gaul and Vandal Africa according to Wickham 2003).

A final issue is the impact on the landscape that endures into the post-Roman period. The Roman impact on Romania has been an issue of contention for several centuries, as outlined in section 1.4. In all of the cases presented, post-Roman inhabitants utilise the same roads, resources and networks which were used in the second and third centuries, but for vastly different reasons. The towns and the forts were used as symbols as much as sources for stone, but the political authority emanating from them diminished within a century. Porolissum eventually gave way to Zalău and Napoca to its suburban villages. The legionary fortress at Potaissa was utilised for burials. Therefore, it is argued that a significant post-Roman population remained at all of these centres which tried to hold onto their authority by maintaining links to the town, especially through funerary practices. This conflicted with newly-established alternative centres which emerged in the fifth century, such as Apahida and Someşeni, which may have been initiated by migratory peoples from Free Dacia.

These interpretations can be contrasted with Oltean's (2007) model for the development of the Mureş Valley, the only other area with such a comprehensive treatment of settlement forms and patterns in Dacia. The main points about the development of the provincial landscape can be summarised as follows:

- The Roman conquest ended the totality of high-status settlements of the previous period.
- An influx of population is suggested through Roman urbanism, a large increase in settlement numbers and settlement density; but imperial directive for this was largely restricted to the reign of Trajan, and subsequently individual colonisation from neighbouring provinces became increasingly common.

- The Late Iron Age distribution of large settlements appears to be strongly influenced by symbolic factors while the Roman settlement pattern appears to be much more strongly influenced by pragmatic factors (communication networks, natural resources).
- The Roman military most crucially influenced the development of the rural landscape by the construction and maintenance of the communication system, and less so by direct involvement in industrial production and trade.

The first point is the only one that may be true for the entirety of Dacia. As discussed in 4.1, hillforts and even their satellite settlements do not last into the Roman period, even if new settlements are established in their proximity. The second point may be supported by evidence for individual colonisation from neighbouring provinces under Hadrian in the Mureş Valley area (Oltean 2007: 220-222), but little evidence can be seen for this in Northwest Transylvania. Even so, when we look at evidence for the expansion of settlement along the river valleys outside of the Empire, we must consider that before and after the Marcomannic Wars, large populations were settling just outside the Roman Empire, and probably were increasingly active within; so much so that Commodus felt compelled to handle this situation. Individual colonisation after the reign of Trajan was could have been coming from Barbaricum in Northwest Transylvania, not from the other provinces.

Although Oltean (2007: 214-215) admits that current knowledge about Late Iron Age settlement is strongly biased, the claim is made that 'reasons other than pragmatism' influenced the emergence and development of the inhabited landscape of the Orăştie Mountains. At the probable central headquarters of the Dacian confederation during the wars with Rome, the most important reason was probably political and religious centralisation. In Northwest Transylvania, the existing pattern in the Late Iron Age seems nothing but pragmatic, in that it developed with a view to control and exploit commercial activity moving between Pannonia and Transylvania through the Meseş Gate. Furthermore, the Roman settlement patterns seem much less focused on mineral

ore exploitation than other parts of Dacia, as has already been stated. The importance of Northwest Transylvania to the imperial government was its role in existing commercial networks which could be exploited.

Finally, the assessment of the impact of the Roman army on the creation of the provincial landscape seems accurate enough for both the Mureş Valley and the interior of the province in Northwest Transylvania (specifically to the southeast of the Almaş River). There is limited evidence in both areas for military connections at rural sites (stamped tiles, evidence for cult of Mithras); however, in Northwest Transylvania there appears to be a concentration around Potaissa and Napoca which is striking considering the limited archaeological intervention at rural settlements. The inscription by a veteran at Ciumăfaia also aids in the argument that the active soldiers and veterans were much more actively involved in the rural landscape here than perhaps many other areas of Transylvania. Northwest Transylvania as a study region also reveals the extent to which the local markets at military bases (specifically Porolissum, but probably also Bologa at the other end of the Meseş *limes*) shaped the distribution of rural settlement and land-use both along the militarised *limes* and in the area just beyond the Empire.

By comparing the Mureş Valley to the different areas of Northwest Transylvania, we can see how different starting points, different paths of development and different types of interaction between groups living in the same area provided very different experiences for the people living in each area. 'Roman Dacia' dissolves into social and material variability which cannot be explained through existing models of Romanisation. Mattingly's (2006: 17) concept of 'discrepant experience' is much more valuable framework for the imperial experience of Dacia, considering the lack of any uniform truths through the province, save the brutal nature of the conquest. We now turn to these issues in the concluding chapter.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

Roman rule in Dacia brought profound cultural and physical changes to the people and the landscape. The Daco-Roman narrative that has so powerfully affected archaeological interpretation in Romania should be modified as a result of analyses presented in this thesis. Here we return to the main themes in an attempt to synthesise the different foci and scales of analysis in the previous chapters.

7.1. Communities and the landscape

Although there are many ways by which a community can be structured (see 2.2), the type most suitable for discussion in archaeology is the local community, or one in which locality plays a powerful role in the construction of shared identity and feelings of belonging (Gerritsen 2003: 113). These communities are bounded by their living space which implies regular interaction between members.

7.1.1. The Late Iron Age

The main archaeological features of the Late Iron Age cultural landscape in Northwest Transylvania were fortified hilltop settlements, isolated cremation burials, dispersed open homesteads and silver deposits. Large prominent hillforts were the most important fixed localities since these incorporate burials, hoards and satellite settlements. These were often constructed on or within older settlements, and so historical narratives were probably attached to these nodal points. The hillforts served as reference points to shape the way local communities identified themselves in the landscape. Fortifications indicate the possibility that the population itself, rather than its

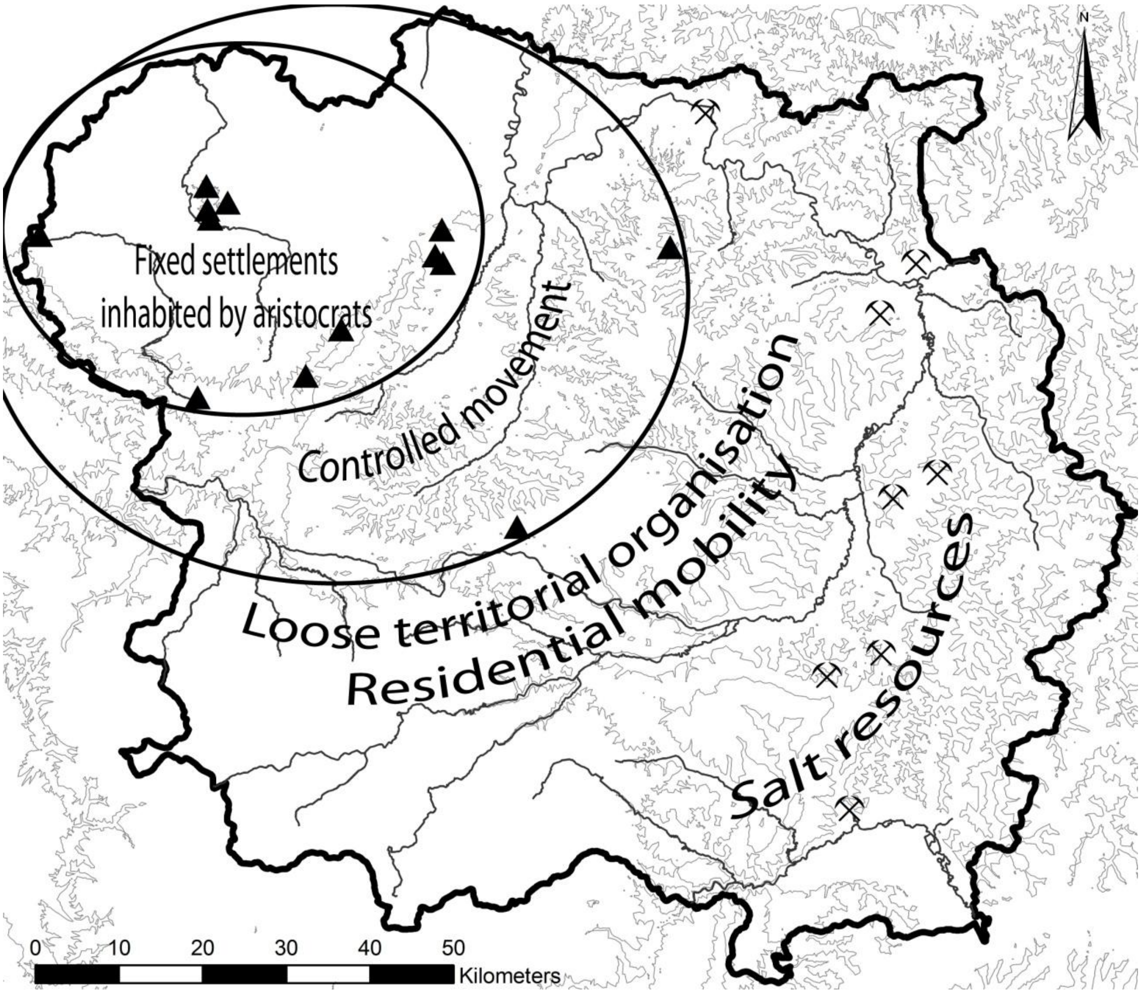


Figure 7.1: Schematic plan of Late Iron Age landscape of Northwest Transylvania.

resources, could be defended against attacks. Hillforts and their associated features also represented a claim on the landscape made by a finite number of individuals confined to the hillfort settlement. The locations of burials on the hillslopes above which the hillforts are situated reflect a concern with visual expression of the social order of the community. This was expressed by the creation of ancestors, deceased individuals who were closely associated with individuals dwelling within the hillfort.

Increasing compartmentalisation of space within the larger hillforts of Şimleu, as well as the consolidation of the forts in the Meseş Gate, shows how these communities evolved over time. In the case of Şimleu, this probably represents an evolving social hierarchy within the hillfort community. From written sources we seem to see the

expansion of political influence and the institutionalisation of social classes which was sanctioned by religious authority during this time. This is expressed through the public cult centre at Şimleu-Observator (see 5.4). If not before, it is during the Late Iron Age when hillforts take up the role of local or regional political administration, responsible for overseeing defence, supply and communication over a territory; and hence a concern with wider networks in Dacia. Overall, however, the evidence does not give the impression of a state level of territorial organisation, but a rather loose corporation of regional aristocracies (*cf.* Diaconescu 2004: 123), holding power by means of perceived kinship or descent.

Individuals who lived inside the Transylvanian Basin but outside the main concentration of hillforts in Northwest Transylvania have left no similar traces of claims or means of structuring communities. Sporadic pre-Roman hoards and burials may indicate some boundaries, but in every case no associated settlements have been located nearby. The most likely explanation is that this population was mobile, dwelling in short-lived homesteads before moving on or subsisting on a pastoral economy. This could be explained by a programme of shifting agriculture and transhumance which finds resonance in modern peasant society at high altitudes (Matley 1970; Surd and Turncock 2000: 287). Cremation burials, hoards and other depositions become more meaningful since they could indicate loose, shifting claims on territory by small communities or households; but so do the communication networks which connect different foci. For Northwest Transylvania, these would presumably be the Someşul Mic, Agrij and Almaş Rivers to travel north; the Arieş River to travel east; the Someş and Someşul Mare to travel west; and a path connecting the Meseş Gate to Potaissa (the Salt Road) to travel south. While Late Iron Age materials or settlements have been found along most of these routes, the closer to the Meseş Gate, the more concentrated

these are around the hillforts. Thus, the 'raids' into Roman territory described in section 1.2 may have simply been regular (seasonal?) movements.

On the level of the household, ritual depositions were practiced which were probably part of a larger set of practices aimed at creating a sense of collective identity. Pit depositions of pottery and burnt animal bone outside of dwellings tend to concentrated on the larger, more long-lived settlements of the Late Iron Age and even Roman periods. However, the occurrence of occasional hoards in the Transylvanian Basin indicates that ritual deposition was probably an important means of place-making among both mobile and sedentary communities.

7.1.2. The Roman period

The Trajanic Roman conquest ended the system of Late Iron Age administration. In southeast Transylvania, along the Olt River, auxiliary forts were positioned in open areas next to every disaffected Dacian hillfort, suggesting a strong concern for pre-existing territories (Glodariu 1981); but in Northwest Transylvania the situation was different. Napoca and its rich villa culture that developed along the Someşul Mic destroyed any traces of small-scale settlement which appeared prior to the occupation; Potaissa was a *vicus* with no real administrative importance until the time of the Marcomannic Wars; and Porolissum and its connected system of forts destroyed any chance for native settlement around the *limes* which might have been associated with Măgura. As Diaconescu (2004: 123) has suggested, Ptolemy (iii. 7. 9) was probably referring to genuine Roman towns rather than Iron Age centres. Most important, there is an important shift of the expression of power from the Şimleu Depression and Meseş Gate area into the Transylvanian Basin where few vestiges of permanent settlement had existed before. This change may have disrupted or re-routed any existing pre-Roman

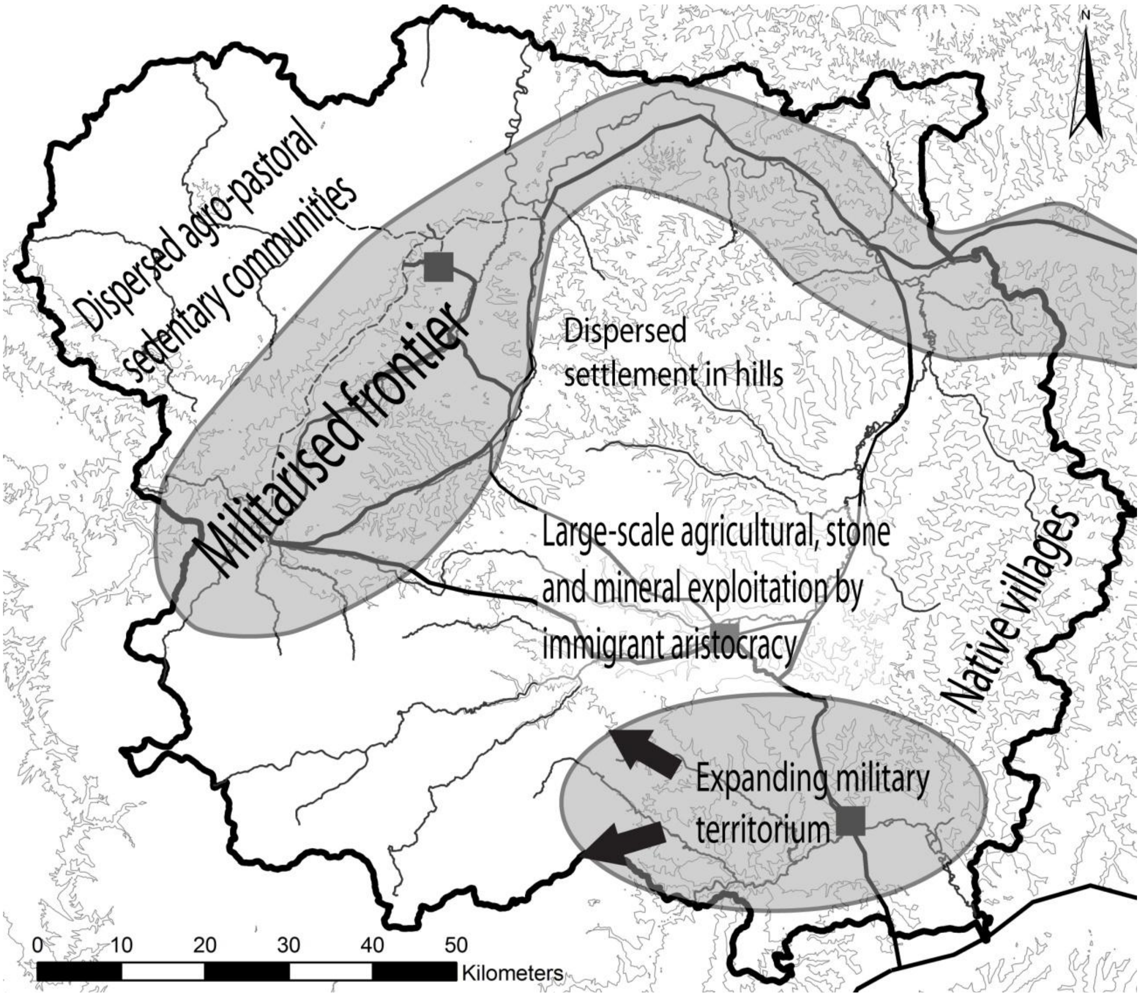


Figure 7.2: Schematic plan of Roman landscape of Northwest Transylvania.

communication networks, diverting them toward Napoca and the military bases. This dislocation of existing settlements in almost every case from the Late Iron Age to the Roman period eradicated reference points and the territorial ordering of the existing cultural landscape.

The numerous changes introduced in the Roman period can be characterised by increased diversity: in settlement layout, in architectural techniques and building materials, in ritual activity, in burial traditions and numerous other venues. All of these influenced the choice of location for new local communities, comprising native inhabitants and immigrants, as well as the way that they structured those communities.

Unlike in the Orăştie Mountains, where monumental stone buildings were used right up until the Roman conquest, there are very few indications that the Dacians in Northwest Transylvania used stone in their architecture in any category of settlement. In the initial phases of all Roman settlement across Northwest Transylvania, forts, towns, villages and homesteads alike, timber was used for structures. However, by the second half of the second century a surge in quarrying of building stone was needed as all of the forts and towns began constructing buildings in stone. Quarries, certainly those near Napoca among others, needed to operate on a significant scale to meet the need for military and civic construction. By the late third century stone buildings were common in the countryside around Napoca and Potaissa, showing that the preference for *opus incertum* construction had moved outside of civic and military confines. Demand for tiles and bricks, as villa and villa-type architecture spread throughout the countryside also needed more fuel to produce and more land to bring under cultivation and pasture animals. This was the likely cause of the expansion of settlements with architectural elaboration outward from main communication routes into the forested foothills of the Apuseni Mountains around Potaissa (see 6.4).

Despite the general absence of evidence for Dacian rural settlement, continuity is suggested at a few places within the new province and substantially more so in Free Dacia. In the eastern portion of the study area, what appear to be native villages and homesteads inhabit the landscape, but on a much more permanent basis than the short-lived settlements which characterised the pre-Roman period. This disjuncture between the spectrum of agglomerations and small individual settlements is not so drastic in the Roman period, with a few villages and a number of larger monumental farms (villas) developing in between.

The huge demand placed on the landscape by the Roman army along the Meseş Mountains is related to the formation of complex villages in the river valleys of Free Dacia. Demand may not have led to the formation of the villages with traces of sedentary or semi-sedentary pastoralism, but it certainly led to this specialisation and intensification. The byre-house is obviously related to knowledge brought from Northern Europe (see 4.4); but the construction of this seemingly in the centre of the village in Zalău is striking since it implies tighter control over wintering livestock. Animal enclosures at other locations suggest similar authority is being exercised. Animal bone assemblages indicate that cattle consumption was high here before the Romans arrived; but the demand (or opportunity?) to trade cattle on a much larger scale called for a reorganisation for how cattle were kept and where they could go.

In evaluating the impact of imperialism on those who suffered the most, the native communities of Northwest Transylvania, we return to the idea of 'discrepant experience' identified in the previous chapter, instead of the Romanisation model of the now-dominant Daco-Roman paradigm (see 1.3.3). There is no evidence that Dacians, elite or non-elite, ever wanted to 'become Roman' or participate in the exploitative systems of the Roman state. Oltean's (2007: 211-213) argument that a few similarities (orientation, position in prominent locations in the landscape) between Late Iron Age settlements and Roman period villas reflect Late Iron Age survivals, and thus Dacian participation in the Roman cultural system, is unconvincing in the Mureş Valley and wholly unsustainable in Northwest Transylvania. It has been established that the villas of this area have much more in common with contemporaneous urban buildings and military baths than any Late Iron Ages structures (see 4.4.3). In contrast with the indigenous participation in, for example, the productive landscapes of Roman Africa (*cf*. Mattingly 1997), there is no evidence for Dacians participating in a system which

offered benefits of local administration, wealth and land ownership. Part of this has to do with the brutality of the conquest, but one cannot accept the extermination or forced immigration of every last inhabitant of pre-Roman Dacia. Local Dacian communities chose not to inscribe their names in towns, build in stone, perhaps even settle down in one place under Roman rule, and as a result there was less imperial accommodation and negotiation. The traditional beneficiaries of Empire aside (the imperial household, the Roman army, the state), the communities who appear to have benefitted the most in Northwest Transylvania were the immigrant tradesmen based in towns and the population living just outside the Empire. For them it was a landscape of opportunity; for the native Dacians living under imperial rule it was a landscape of disenfranchisement.

7.1.3. The post-Roman period

Post-Roman settlement in the fourth century utilised the same roads, resources and networks which were used in the second and third centuries, but for vastly different reasons. In Free Dacia and the area to the east of the towns, life appears to have continued as normal through the fourth century; but along the main communication networks important transformations were taking place. The towns and the forts were used as symbols of authority as much as sources for stone, but the political authority emanating from them diminished within a century. A significant post-Roman population remained at all of these centres, comprising municipal aristocrats and Daco-Roman families (see *infra*) which tried to hold onto life as it was before by maintaining links to the town, especially through funerary practices.

Over the course of the fourth century, the larger Roman centres appear to have fallen into disuse. Related to this was the establishment of centres of activity on the

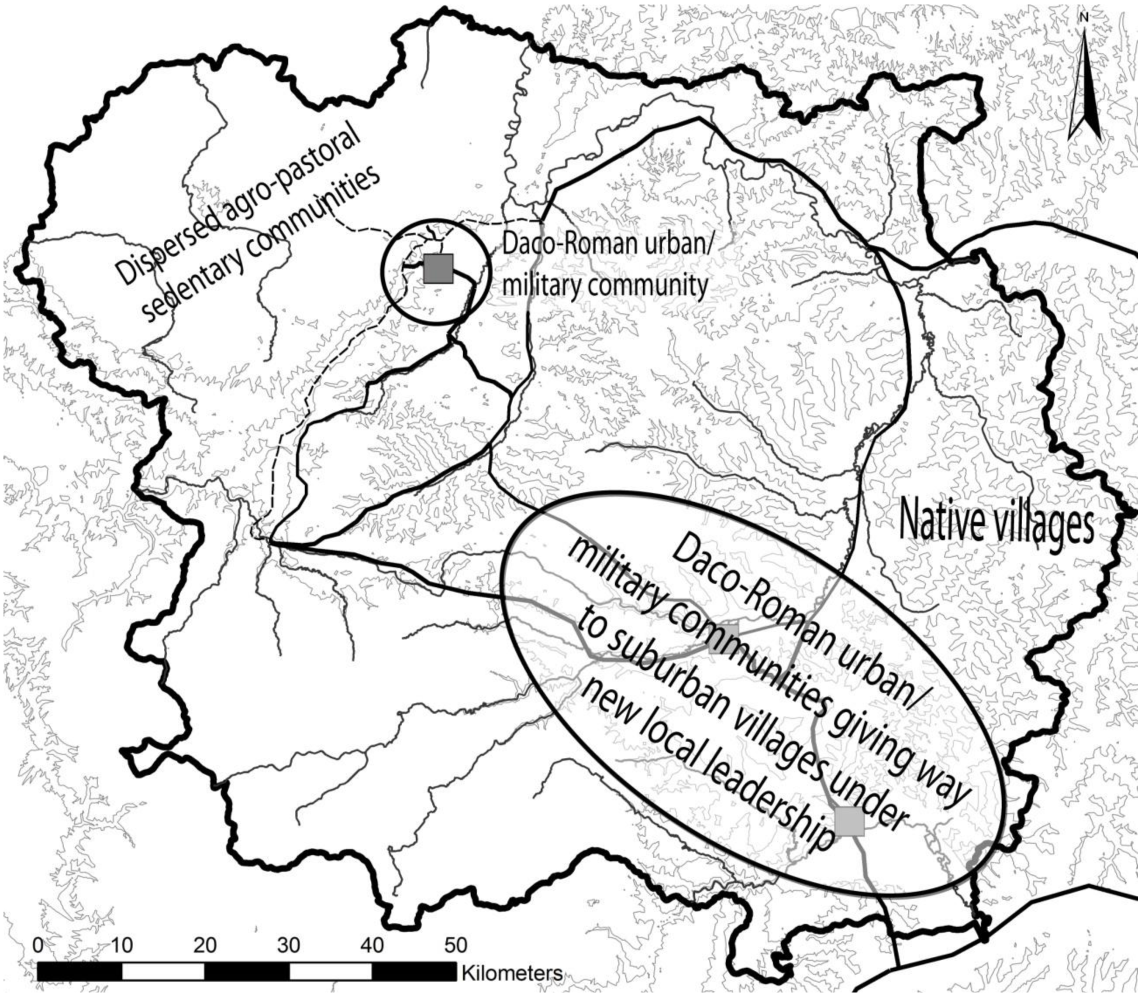


Figure 7.3: Schematic plan of post-Roman landscape of Northwest Transylvania.

outskirts of the towns, one or two kilometres away, such as Apahida and Someşeni. This move may in part have had to do with the establishment of new settlements by people migrating from Free Dacia as evidenced by the expansion of intrusive architectural forms (see 4.4). The most visible aspects of these communities are wealthy burials and hoards which reflect a concern with portraying connections with Rome and personal ornament, indicating that the leaders at many of these settlements in close proximity might have been in direct competition with each other; and thus, that the people living in these settlements may have relied more heavily on fellow villagers than on outside networks of support. Over the course of the fourth century we see the personalisation of authority through costume and possessions rather than authority emanating from the

state. This is illustrated best in the Someşul Mic Valley but there is also evidence at Potaissa and Şimleu (see Chapter 6). The archaeological evidence from the fifth century that is available shows great variation in materials deposited in burials and hoards, though gold seems to have been the most highly valued material; and less variation in the scarce settlement architecture which has been excavated. Though far from conclusive, this contributes to the idea of fragmentation threatening social connectivity established in the Roman period or the fourth century.

7.2. Communities beyond locality

The specific character of ancient local communities in Northwest Transylvania requires shared locality as a pre-requisite. The following communities were not bound by space or locality, but by symbols and experiences. We return to the idea that discrepant experiences create different perceptions, histories and cultures (Mattingly 2006: 17). We must, however, note that none of these communities are exclusive to each other, in that a military veteran of a regimental community could very well also be an aristocrat, or members of a regimental unit could be, and frequently were, of the same ethnicity. However, the choices about how and where to express their community association, the mechanisms by which the communities were held together and the reasons for their existence are quite variable, and as such require separate discussions.

7.2.1. Aristocratic communities

Aristocrats are self-aware members of the social and political elite who actively display their privileged nature, values and lifestyles. Thus, an aristocratic community is collectively defined by distinction of ancestry, a position in an official hierarchy, a lifestyle of shared practices and, most importantly, recognition by other political leaders. Emphasis is on the aspect of community in the construction of aristocracy,

since it is not autonomous. Mutual recognition of these characteristics is essential for the continued maintenance of aristocratic identity and the very real social and political power. Aristocratic communities existed over the entirety of the study period, but the Roman socio-political framework for these had much more resonance in later periods than the Dacian one, most likely because of the deliberate destruction of that framework. Table 7.1 summarises the shared practices of the aristocratic communities for each period.

Table 7.1: Practices of aristocratic communities by period. That of the Roman period appears to overlap extensively with the community of soldiers.

	Practices	Settlement form and location
Dacian	Hoarding silver Cremation burials with rich assemblages Depositions in round pits Personal ornament and hairstyle	Enclosure (fortification) Intra-settlement compartmentalisation Settlement located at high altitudes Visible location
Roman municipal	Funerary monuments Epigraphic habit Votives Personal ornament Finewares	Urban or villa residency Terracotta roof tiles and stone foundations Hypocaust heating systems Compartmentalisation within the house Settlement at middle or low altitudes
Post-Roman	Inhumation burials with rich assemblages Personal ornament	Location near former population centres Settlement at middle or low altitudes

Dacian aristocratic authority was associated with hillforts at the time of the Roman conquest, and was involved in some form of territorial administration focused on ancestral landscapes. Various styles of fortification, all of which differ significantly from other regions, do not reflect a concern for function and practicality alone. Especially in the case of the so-called *acropolis* fortifications at Şimleu-Observator and Şimleu-Cetate, fortifications were used simply to segregate space rather than create a safe zone in the case of a siege. The highest spaces were probably important places for interaction between members of the aristocratic class, whether local or foreign. In addition, we have demonstrated that silver hoarding, deposits in round pits and isolated cremation burials near to hillforts appear to be characteristic of a class of Dacian society who were benefiting the most from commercial routes and social reforms. Notably, in a

number of the burial assemblages and depositions are brooches and ceremonial arms and armour, implying an importance attached to personal ornament and military prowess. From written sources and depictions on monuments, we are also able to detect distinction in personal appearance: those associated with the upper echelon are said to have cut their hair (see 1.2).

Burial groups with similar grave assemblages to those known around Şimleu are known in Roman period Free Dacia, suggesting continuity of one aspect of the pre-Roman practice. However, like the post-Roman population of the towns, these individuals were invoking memory and tradition rather than maintaining an active community which was explicitly exploiting others. Perhaps in their own local villages they draw on their ancestral prestige and assert their power, but there is no evidence that they were able to maintain that same recognition from other individuals or groups in positions of political authority. Aristocratic *identity* may have persisted, but the context for a Dacian aristocratic community to express itself was lost at the time of the conquest.

Aristocracy in the Roman period operated on three different levels: the imperial, the provincial and the municipal. The municipal aristocracy, or the *curiales* or *decuriones*, was the most active in daily life in Roman Dacia following the conquest; and in reality, though all three levels were intertwined, none of the towns in northern Dacia were centres where *curiales* were advancing to high offices such as senators. Even so, these individuals were drawn from the wealthiest people, and thus wealth served as an important social and political barrier for membership in this community. As opposed to local native aristocrats finding their way through the labyrinth of public administration framed in Roman terms, the administration of towns in Roman Dacia seems to have been limited to individuals from the Empire who were already familiar

with it (see 4.2). This probably drew mainly from the military, but a distinguished veteran serving in a municipal office was serving a much different role than that of a soldier, which was dominated by a similar but not identical set of cultural expressions. As an example, the use of villa architecture is much more prominent in the environs of Napoca, the only town without an associated military base, than those of Porolissum and Potaissa where soldiers and veterans were also likely to have settled. This community is easily demonstrated in Northwest Transylvania because of its conspicuous use of durable materials and the epigraphic habit. Although some of these practices are not unique to its members, the governing class is always disproportionately represented in epigraphic inscriptions. In addition, they certainly made use of the intrusive architectural techniques of *opus incertum*, terracotta roof tiles and bricks which spread throughout the countryside. It is certain that many of the villas around Napoca were the more important beneficiaries in this community.

One of the features in this area that is unique to the aristocratic community is the division of the internal space of villas and some urban buildings, which essentially comprise a giant block of small rooms. As noted, many share similar architectural features in this region besides the small rooms: offset apses, numerous heated rooms, side corridors and possible origins in a building divided into only three sections (see 4.4). This may refer to a common architectural language which Smith (1997) began to develop; but these structures bear little in common with their Iron Age predecessors in this area. Although there are some commonalities with villa architecture in Central and Eastern Europe, the plans of these structures are so distinctive that they are likely to have developed within the province by an aristocratic community seeking to establish its own set of building traditions in urban and rural contexts, an invented community of provincial elite.

The post-Roman aristocracy went through two phases. In the first phase, in the fourth century, we see the possibility of continuing patterns of localised politics centred in towns. Building activity in the forum of Porolissum and continued use of the cemeteries in all three towns meant some type of local administrative structures were still in place, albeit weak ones. This likely indicates the continuity of a weakened aristocracy. Besides continued use of urban space, the fourth century municipal aristocracy also manifested its position by personal ornament. A number of crossbow-shaped brooches originate from Apulum, and at least two examples come from Porolissum and Potaissa (see 5.1). Diaconescu (1999) has argued that these are typical of fourth century *honestiores* of native society and were not worn by barbarians. Post-Roman rank and status were communicated through personal appearance, a fact corroborated by the story of St. Germanus at Verulamium (Johnson 1980: 154). This was an official symbol whereby aristocrats recognised each other and distinguished their small group from everyone else in post-Roman Dacia.

Across the Empire, post-Roman aristocracies tended to be poorer; established regional and sub-regional elites disappeared; and traditional ‘great families’ were destroyed by regionalisation (Wickham 2005: 255-258). However, a vast majority of the rural population could not have been particularly enthusiastic toward the taxation, military levies and land appropriation characteristic of Roman rule. How then could the town-centred aristocracy hold onto any of its former power? The most likely answer is the expectation that Roman authority would one day return. The end of Roman Dacia was disadvantageous for the municipal aristocracy, and the hope of a return of imperial power kept them tied to the same tasks as before but on a much smaller scale. Besides maintaining a local aristocratic community, this expectation served as leverage for them to keep their power over inhabitants who may otherwise have been reluctant. There is

evidence to support the idea that the Roman withdrawal, from the point of view of the provincial soldiers and politicians, was not anticipated to be permanent. At Apulum, several hoards were found in the residence of the governor of the Three Dacias, one ending with issues of Aurelian. Mitrofan (1940) and Diaconescu (2004: 135) have interpreted these as belonging to slaves, servants of administrators or the governor's guard, implying that the owners thought that they would return to recover them.

In the fifth century, all of this changed. By now every individual who had lived under the Roman occupation of Dacia was dead. Even the brief Constantinian intervention in Oltenia was a distant memory, and the most visible, portable symbols of Roman authority, coins with imperial imagery, stopped making their way into Northwest Dacia. The built infrastructure of the Roman towns had begun to deteriorate to the point where it is unlikely that the municipal aristocracy held any of their former power. This environment allowed the construction of new aristocratic communities, whose power was based entirely on the invocation of memory of the Roman state. Unlike its fourth-century counterpart, members of this aristocratic community were not based within towns, but near to them upon important communication routes. This new community expressed its distinction with personal ornament laden with Roman symbols; especially in burial contexts (see 5.1). The territories over which they held power and influence were probably much smaller than in the Roman period and probably even in the fourth century. Fifth century burials and hoards are much more closely spaced with overlapping agricultural territories, all positioned in proximity to towns. Roman ancestry might have been claimed using the towns which were now probably more objects of myths and legends than active settlements. However, across the entirety of the former Empire, ancestry became less important as the power and memory of the Roman Empire waned. Wickham (2005: 168) claims that by AD 800, no

aristocratic individual knew his or her male-line ancestors in AD 400, even though there were numerous urban aristocratic families speaking Latin, Greek and other official languages. Here, we see this process occurring much sooner. This aristocratic community used the Roman landscape to create their identity, whether they were immigrants or Daco-Romans; but they depended on each other, and used more distant contacts with Roman authorities, to maintain their local power structures.

7.2.2. Regimental communities

The Roman army was an imagined community, focused on the ideological indoctrination of soldiery through training and camp life. These common experiences gave rise to common practices which were found throughout the Empire (Mattingly 2006: 199-224; Haynes 1999b). The soldiers who were actually enlisted and their associates, sought not only to craft their relationships around similar social practices, but to differentiate themselves from ordinary civilians. Nevertheless, the diverse origins, languages and customs of the soldiers and civilians living at military bases created localised patterns of behaviour. In this sense, we can distinguish three layers of community on a military base: the community of soldiers, a state institution comprising only the members of the army and distinct from any associates; the regimental community which develops its own distinct character resulting from its location and its ethnic composition; and the community of the military base, comprising the members of the army and their associates including slaves, wives, children and merchants (Haynes 1999b; James 1999; 2001).

Table 7.2 distinguishes the common practices of the Roman army on one scale from the variability of the regimental communities in Northwest Transylvania. Small variations in these practices could be very meaningful. Brick stamps of the *legio V*

Macedonica are found frequently throughout the countryside around Potaissa as well as in Napoca, but in other parts of Northwest Transylvania regimental stamps are restricted to the military bases. Furthermore, brick stamps of the *cohors I Hispanorum* which have been found in the forum at Porolissum significantly outnumber those of other units. Important spatial differences in tower shape between the area around Bologa and the rest of the Meseş Mountains were also noted which cannot be attributed to function. The military camps of Dacia all show a high percentage of beef consumption, the 'Gallic-German pattern' according to King (2001). However, the consumption of mutton and wild game was highly variable along the Meseș Mountains at forts with the same access to pasture, and probably has to do with associated ethnic communities.

Table 7.2: Distinguishing between the Roman army as a community and regimental communities.

Practice	Roman army	Regimental variation
Construction	similar designs for fortified structures	square or circular towers use of brick stamps
Diet	'Gallic-German' pattern wine	mutton consumption (high variation) pork consumption (low variation) high variation in wild game
Dress	camp dress	types of metal fittings
Consumption	oxidised, wheelmade pottery	pottery forms
Religion	votive altars votive statuettes cult centres epigraphic habit cults of Italy and Danube provinces	offices of dedicants making votive inscriptions (high variation) range of deities represented (high variation) intensity of specific cults

Although certain patterns in military religion exist in Northwest Transylvania, not only did the deities themselves vary from base to base but also the range of deities and who was making dedications to them. Căşeiu has far too many dedications by *beneficiarii consularis* to be an archaeological coincidence, since these inscriptions are found at other places but in much less quantity. This has something to do with the probable *statio* located nearby, but that does not explain why more soldiers were not

making dedications. The differences in cults signify important differences between the regiments which, like diet, are also tied to ethnic communities, and discussed below.

7.2.3. Ethnic communities

An ethnic community is based around the idea of a shared heritage in language, culture, religion and behaviour. Ethnicity itself may be seen as an aspect of relationships which must constantly be maintained, dependant on constant reiteration through both everyday activities and practice (Lucy 2005). In this sense, ethnicity cannot exist without community; but this was even more important in Roman Dacia which was filled with immigrant ‘carpetbaggers’ in the early years of occupation. These individuals needed to establish a sense of place in the new province and they did this by seeking out others whom they perceived to come from a similar background.

When a number of recognised foreign *nomina* or *cognomina* from the same external region appear on inscriptions in the same locality, there is a good indication that there may be an ethnic community there utilising the public domain to communicate what makes them different. Epigraphic evidence makes a case for African, Greek and Thracian communities at Porolissum; for Greek and Thracian communities at Napoca; and for a Thracian community at Gherla (Table 7.3); and yet no military units explicitly recruited from these regions are present at these forts. Different layers of communities manifest in different domains, and so a soldier could communicate himself as Roman soldier in some contexts but an ‘African’ when with family, slaves and other non-combatants who were of the same ethnicity. It should also be noted that in no cases were the individuals mentioned in the inscriptions explicit about whether they were freeborn, freedmen or servile.

In Napoca, two specific inscriptions make a more solid case for ethnic communities. The first is the *spira* which has already been mentioned several times (CIL III, 870). It is important to draw special attention to the fact that although it contains numerous names of Roman, Greek, Syrian or Thracian origin, the names are all preceded by a summary: *nomina Asianorum*. Nowhere else would we see 'Asian names' describing such a diverse group of people but in an unfamiliar location. These immigrants probably came from Asia Minor or the Black Sea area. As Schäfer (2004) notes, these immigrants actively sought each other out in order to situate themselves in their new homeland. In the same town, an altar to Jupiter was placed in the town by *Galatae consistentes* (CIL III, 860), suggesting a similar situation. Numerous modern parallels could be cited, such as African-Americans or British-Asians.

Table 7.3: Evidence for ethnic communities in Northwest Transylvania.

Ethnicity	Location	Evidence for community
African	Porolissum	*nomina* and *cognomina* related to Africa (Afri, Afer)
Asian	Napoca	inscription of *collegium Asianorum*
Gallic	Napoca	inscription of *Galatae consistentes*
German	Zalău	byre-house construction
Greek	Napoca	Greek *cognomina* (Ermes, Hyius, Zoilus, Zoilianus, Hermescus, Epipodia, Asclepiodata) on the *spira*
	Porolissum	Greek *nomina* and *cognomina* (Eutychia, Castor, Theofilus, Erastus, Eufemus, Hedulos)
Illyrian	Porolissum	stone enclosure of burials
Ituraean	Porolissum	low percentage of pork remains in *vicus* vs. high percentage in forum
Palmyrene	Porolissum	cult centre of Bel; cult of Dea Syria; high consumption of beef associated with feast of Maan celebrated at Palmyra; presence of unit
Thracian	Gherla	Thracian *cognomina* (Pisusus, Dines, Brisenus); presence of unit
	Napoca	Thracian *cognomina* (Tattaro, Dizo, Eptala, Mucianus, Tzinto, Tzinta)
	Porolissum	Thracian *nomina* and *cognomina* (Mucianus, Succissianus, Mucatralis, Bithus)

In addition to epigraphic evidence, there are also traces of ethnic communities detectable using only archaeological evidence. At Porolissum, the stone enclosures around burials in the Ursoieş cemetery are rare, but studies have shown this behaviour is particular to Illyrians in Dacia (Nemeţi 2003). We might also note that pork is

consumed in noticeably small quantities in the area of the *vicus* of Porolissum as opposed to the forum. This could be explained by the early presence of the *cohors I Augusta Ituraeorum* in the area until the end of the second century. Considering the quantity in relation to other military bases (see 4.5), it is likely that the Semitic prohibition on pork was probably observed in the locality. The presence of a temple to Bel and the cult of Dea Syria at Porolissum also support the presence of an active Palmyrene community which also manifested its identity outside the context of its military unit. Besides this, we might attribute the relatively high consumption of beef in the *vicus* not just to the preference of the military diet but also to feasting associated with Palmyrene deities (Teixidor 1979: 83). Finally, the byre-house and its associated structures located in Zalău, Free Dacia of the Roman period, is an intrusive form of settlement and architecture which derives from Northern Europe, most likely via the Buri who are attested in written sources (see 6.1). A small community settled among the Dacians in the floodplain to capitalise on the market at Porolissum, and in doing so utilised specific architectural traditions to communicate their differences.

7.2.4. A case for a Daco-Roman community

In section 1.3, the problems with the use of the labels of Dacian and Roman 'cultures' was highlighted in the context of protochronism and the current Daco-Roman paradigm. Through the entire thesis, we have challenged myths of homogeneity across Roman Dacia and Northwest Transylvania. Nevertheless, we now return to the idea of a 'Daco-Roman' in the context of a self-aware group of individuals who were connected by the shared experience of ethnically mixed households and provincial life.

Ironically, to make the case for a Daco-Roman community, we must start with the question of extermination and deportation of defeated Dacians by the Romans.

There is little reason to doubt the rough figure of 50,000 male prisoners led out of Dacia following the war; nor is there any reason to doubt that a significant number of the adult male population were killed either in the course of the wars or in operations following the final war. This large population was divided and scattered. From the very limited epigraphic evidence, we know that Dacian males ended up as personal slaves and freedmen in Italy, Pannonia, Dalmatia, Moesia, Gaul, and Mauretenia and that they were frequently associated with military garrisons who had participated in the Dacian wars (Bodor 1999). Another destination for the prisoners was Italian amphitheatres, where games were celebrated for not less than 117 days between AD 107 and 109 in honour of Trajan's victory, featuring 9,883 gladiators and 11,000 animals (Cass. Dio lxviii. 15. 1; Bennett 1997: 105). A significant number were also likely transported to the Pannonian silver mines, working to exhaustion the rest of their lives (Bodor 1999).

Dacians probably also fled to Free Dacia following the outcome of the final war. Even after Sarmizegetusa fell, further military operations needed to be conducted as related on Trajan's *tropaeum*, implying that the entire provincial territory was not completely under military control. This period would have allowed for the migration of families to the Northwest through the Meseş Gate. For this, we find some archaeological support: the expansion and dispersal of settlement throughout the Şimleu Depression seems unrelated to the population of the former hillfort complex. This is a trend all over Free Dacia around the river valleys, and is not confined to the area of the Şimleu Massif.

The alternative to migration, either forced or voluntary, was staying. A number of rural Dacians may have done just that in the southeast (see 4.4); but instances of settlement continuity are extremely rare throughout Northwest Transylvania. Archaeological and historical literature have focused exclusively on men and older

children who were subjected either to extermination or deportation, and have largely ignored the role of women and young children who remained. These individuals most likely remained in Dacia to be taken as local slaves by the military, and in some cases wives. Mass deportation and extermination of men would have left a significant number of Dacian widows. They were probably taken by eligible males as wives and female slave-concubines, in many cases who might later become wives (Varon 1994). This best explains the presence of Dacian handmade wares especially in military bases (Gilău, Buciumi, Bologa, Romita and Porolissum), but also in towns and villas. It was these native women, in subordinate roles, that carried on the less visible aspects of Dacian tradition. From these inter-racial households was born a Daco-Roman community. The presence of Dacian handmade wares in places of official business, like the customs house at Porolissum, meant that soldiers were making use of these products, not just women or slaves in their daily routine.

The fact that families were created by these relationships shows why, after the withdrawal of the military and political administration from Dacia, the municipal aristocracy were still able to hold some amount of power. There were citizens, slaves and freedman who were the descendants of mixed households from several generations ago who felt more of an affinity to a 'Dacian homeland' than to Rome. This also helps to explain the small proportion of fourth-century artefacts at some of the military bases (see 5.3). After nearly a century of being able to harness this labour to conduct small-scale projects in towns, the power of the municipal aristocracy faded, and the community which was bound together by a shared Daco-Roman history faded into memory.

7.3. Final remarks

This research began with the question of how the Romans affected the landscape. This was meant to explore more than the effect of the Roman army, which was quite substantial, but also how people's perceptions of place changed. This was not intended as a definitive treatment of Roman Dacia, or even every aspect of Northwest Transylvania; and in many cases, hypotheses have been presented that cannot be substantiated or refuted without the careful collection of new data. Nevertheless, what has been demonstrated is that it is possible to reconstruct a large amount of information about social relationships and their transformations in the ancient world with a careful analysis of spatial layout and location of archaeology at different scales over a long period. While written sources complemented some of the archaeological evidence, for many periods and areas it was insufficient. Therefore, this approach has useful applications in other archaeological periods and other areas.

This approach could usefully be applied to other parts of ancient Dacia. To do so successfully, three important issues must be raised. First of all, more attention must be paid to the spatial component of data to make meaningful interpretations about the archaeological landscape. Although more and more excavations are making use of equipments such as Total Stations and GPS, the precise location of sites and finds, along with plans and layouts, needs to be communicated outside the county museums where they are documented. A second issue is the dearth of information on rural settlement in all periods, but most importantly the Late La Tène and immediate post-Roman periods where architectural materials are less conspicuous. Throughout the entire period under analysis, there is little evidence that the varied communities were anything other than predominantly rurally based; and yet very little is known about dietary practices, patterns of nucleation and dispersal, rural crafts and industries, and

nothing is known about field systems. Useful strides toward understanding the nature of rural settlement have been made in this thesis with data from salvage excavations, but Romanian archaeology is not at a point where a focused archaeological treatment of rural settlement can be written. In order to address this issue, more regional surveys need to be undertaken, such as the aerial survey of the Mureş Valley (Oltean 2007); and more focused environmental studies of pollen from secure contexts may be the way forward for better understanding of land-use. Finally, this approach has emphasised that community is an appropriate scale and unit of analysis for archaeological data within the landscape. This is the means to overcome both terminological problems with units of analysis (site versus settlement versus find) as well as theoretical issues rooted in culture-history in Romanian archaeology.

Bibliography

Abbreviations used in text

AE	*L'Année Epigraphique*
Amm. Marc.	Ammianus Marcellinus
App. *B Civ*.	Appian *The Civil Wars*
App. *Illyr*.	Appian *Illyrian Wars*
Aristid. *Or*.	Aristides *Orations*
Aug. *RG*	Augustus *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*
Aur. Vic. *Caes.*	Aurelius Victor *Liber de Caesaribus*
Cass. Dio	Dio Cassius *Roman History*
CIL	Mommsen (ed.) *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*
Dig.	*The Civil Law*
Dio Chrys. *Or*.	Dio Chrysostomus *Discourses*
Euseb. *Hist. eccl.*	Eusebius *The Ecclesiastical History*
Eutr.	Eutropius *Breviarium*
Exc. Val.	*Excerpta Valesiana*
Fest. *Brev*.	Festus *Breviarium of the accomplishments of the Roman people*
FGrH	Jacoby (ed.) *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*
Flor.	Florus *Epitomae*
Hor. *Carm.*	Horace *Odes*
ILS	Dessau (ed.) *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae*
Ioann. *De Mag.*	Ioannes Lydus *On powers*
Jord. *Get*.	Jordanes *The origin and deeds of the Goths*
Julian *Caes*.	Julian *The Caesars*
Lactant. *De mort.*	Lactantius *De mortibus persecutorum*
Livy *Epit. Per*.	Livy *History of Rome. Summaries*
Luc. Sam. *Schol.*	Lucian of Samosata *Scholia in Lucianum*
Mart. *Epig.*	Martial *Epigrams*
MGH AA	Mommsen (ed.) *Chronica minora saec. IV, V, VI, VII*
Oros.	Orosius *History against the pagans*
Ov. *Pont*.	Ovid *Ex Ponto*
Plin. *Pan*.	Pliny (the Younger) *Panegyricus*
Plut. *Vit. Ant*.	Plutarch *Antony*
Ptol. *Geog*.	Ptolemy *The Geography*
RRC	Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage*
Sen. *Prov*.	Seneca *De Providentia*
SHA *Aurel*.	Scriptores Historiae Augustae *Aurelian*
SHA *Hadr*.	Scriptores Historiae Augustae *Hadrian*
Suet. *Tib*.	Suetonius *Tiberius*
SIG	Wittenberger, W., *Sylloge Inscriptonum Graecarum*
Strabo	Strabo *Geographia*
Suet. *Aug*.	Suetonius *Lives of the Caesars, Divus Augustus*
Suet. *Dom*.	Suetonius *Lives of the Caesars, Domitianus*
Tac. *Hist*.	Tacitus *Historiae*
Zos.	Zosimus *New History*

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